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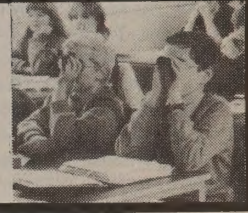
Talking of Sex

7

**DPI:
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Snowdon hits thoughtless planning for students

Photo-reportage

Colleges which do not consider the practical needs of disabled students enough, inaccessible modern libraries and museums and a Government which does not make available an indoor-outdoor wheelchair were all criticised by Lord Snowdon last month.

He was speaking at the presentation of the annual Snowdon awards, when disabled students receive bursaries to help with their expenses at college.

In a survey of 50 winners carried out last year by Action Research for the Crippled Child to gauge the success of the scheme, it was found that over half the students had encountered unforeseen problems at college resulting from their disability.

"The bad things we learnt were the varying standards and lack of thought given to the practical needs of disabled students which regrettably is still evident in many universities and colleges," said Lord Snowdon.

He suggested that colleges should liaise informally to help each other solve problems – not via "a 5-day seminar attended by robed rectors and professors sitting in conclave."

Poor access to buildings was



Mark Rayson from Llanelli, who won a £2,000 Snowdon award, with Lord Snowdon and his parents.

mentioned frequently by the students. Lord Snowdon was scathing about modern museums and libraries with "often thoughtless and inconsiderate designs" which make them inaccessible.

He was also concerned that many students had spent their

bursaries on a powered wheelchair. He criticised the Government for ignoring a recommendation of the McColl Report, published a year ago, which called for an indoor-outdoor chair and found the existing companion-controlled chair "grotesquely inadequate".

"If only we could get the Government to supply indoor-outdoor wheelchairs when needed by disabled students, then the small bursaries we provide could be used to much better effect," said Lord Snowdon.

Snowdon award winners page 5

Action on McColl soon

The Government is expected to make a major policy statement this month on its plans for artificial limb and appliance centres – the subject of a highly critical report by Professor Ian McColl published a year ago.

There are hopes that reorganisation plans will correspond to many of the recommendations in the McColl report. Provision of a driver operated, indoor/outdoor wheelchair, the subject of much campaigning over the last 2 years, looks likely.

The McColl working party, set up by the DHSS in May 1984, called for a complete reorganisation of the supply and servicing of artificial limbs and wheelchairs. Recommendations included a new ALAC management board independent of the DHSS though funded by it, overhauling the wheelchair repair and maintenance service, opening the artificial limb service to competition between suppliers and making available dual-purpose powered wheelchairs.

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Gallup results surprise

Most of the British public think disabled people should get preferential treatment when applying for jobs. They also think people with a disability should receive equal benefits, regardless of how or when they became disabled.

These are the startling results of two Gallup polls.

In the first poll, in November 1986, 1000 adults were asked whether applicants for jobs who were from an ethnic minority, women, homosexual, or disabled, should be given preference over others – providing they were suitable. These were the percentages in favour:

- Disabled people 57 per cent
- Women 18 per cent
- Ethnic minorities 13 per cent
- Homosexuals 7 per cent

"These results will be very useful when we next try to get legislation on the statute book against discrimination due to disability", said Bob Wareing MP, who introduced the last anti-discrimination bill in the Commons in 1983.

But John Hannam MP, secretary of the All-party Disablement Group, was unimpressed.

"There's been a good deal of sympathy for disabled people since the International Year of the Disabled in 1981," he said. "But if you think in terms of the people who are struggling at the moment just to get equal treatment, it really doesn't make much sense to start talking about positive discrimination."

Steven Whaley, chairman of management services for Lambeth council, which has a "positive action" policy on employing disabled people, said he was not surprised by the poll results.

"It reflects the way that people perceive disadvantage," he said. "They don't want to admit that they discriminate against women, ethnic minorities and gays, but they find positive

continued on page 16

Government pays for the weather

Conservative MPs cheered when they heard that the Government was making a £5 severe weather payment for the second week running.

Announcing the decision on 20 January, John Major, Minister for Social Security, also said that the "trigger" temperature for the payments would be raised from an average of minus 1.5°C a week to 0°C. People who were eligible for the payments and had not yet applied should do so at once.

To qualify you must receive supplementary benefit, have less than £500 in savings and be a householder with someone under 5, over 65 or chronically sick or disabled.

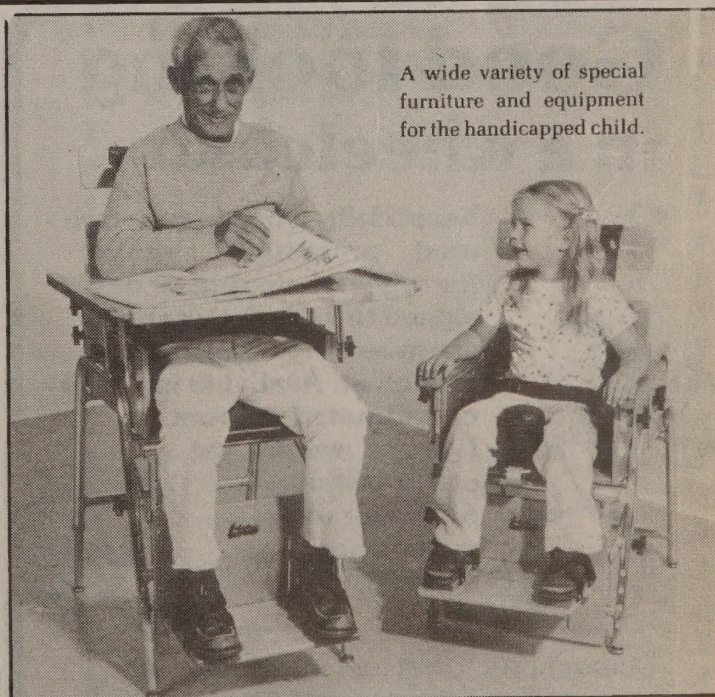
Shadow Social Services Secretary, Michael Meacher, thinks the scheme is "more like an elimination test than an entitlement."

★ The Timber & Brick Homes Consortium, representing 100 companies in timber frame housing, has criticised the Government's proposed new building regulations on home insulation for falling far short of what is needed for effective thermal insulation.

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Letters to the Editor

Disability Now 12 Park Crescent London W1N 4EQ

Struggling on unaided

I read with interest Mrs McDonagh's speech on behalf of ageing parents of severely and multiply handicapped adults (DN, January).

I am the parent of a multi-handicapped boy and like many others, loving my son as I do, I have chosen to keep him at home for 24 years thus sparing the State many thousands of pounds. This has proved to be a most strenuous task since my son needs continuous day and night care.

I am now 59 and my husband is 70.

We are founder members of the Sandwell District Spastics Society which was formed mainly because it became apparent to us that whenever requests were made to the local authority for aids and adaptations no funds were available or, on the other hand, the waiting list for these aids was horrendous. We thought our best policy was to try and help ourselves and provide others with some support.

Over the years it has become apparent to me that the vast resources of The Spastics Society are geared to equipping residential homes with specialised equipment, running various centres and providing education for cp people. Very worthy causes, but of absolutely no use to my son, or indeed to many members of our group.

I feel most strenuously that the resources of the Society should be used to help parents like us and give us some support. How refreshing it would be to have a social worker visit regularly, for example.

Recently the Society did help me to fundraise for a special Car Chair for my son and for this I am grateful. But there must be countless other parents who need help.

I have struggled on unaided

these many years, learning only from the experience of looking after my son or talking to other members of the group. It would be most gratifying if we parents could feel that The Spastics Society cared about us.

Sheila Matthews
Hon Secretary,
Sandwell District Spastics Society,
85 Anderson Crescent,
Great Barr, Birmingham



Andrew Matthews on holiday with his parents, Exmouth 1983.

A safe lift

The recent circular by the Health & Safety Executive, on lift safety, is not a moment too soon (see DN, October).

For the reassurance of residential home owners, I would like to point out that Stannah Lifts have not been involved in any of those accidents reported. Nor have we received any reports of malfunctions in our lifts which could have been potentially dangerous.

But to maintain our high standards of safety to customers, we have recently introduced a new range of lifts, the Piccolo, specially designed to meet the needs of nursing and rest homes. Piccolo fully complies with BS 5655, the commercial lift Standard, while at the same time offering excellent value.

Stannah have been able to in-

roduce a safe lift at an affordable price for residential homes by cutting back on some of those extras that are not appropriate for such applications. For example, the lift travels at a lower speed than larger commercial lifts, a feature which is welcomed by many elderly and disabled people.

Each Piccolo is fitted with a hydraulic overspeed governor, thus preventing the type of accidents which have occurred in some other makes of lift.

We would like to urge other manufacturers to join us in ensuring that the industry's high reputation is not permanently

damaged by the sad events which have prompted this letter.

Alan Stannah
Stannah Lifts
East Portway
Andover, Hants

"Prevention" means abortion?

I was unable to get to this year's AGM, and so missed Professor Bobrow's talk on the causes of cp, (DN, December).

I wonder what he means by being able "to spot abnormal development and then plan prevention"? Hopefully this is not a euphemism for offering the mother an abortion, as has been done to "prevent" the birth of Down's Syndrome and Spina Bifida babies.

I wonder how many members of the Alpha Advisory Committee would like to have been "prevented" in this way?

Pam Harris
123 Woodland Drive
Watford
Herts

Professor Bobrow writes: If the process of development was understood, there would be various ways of planning prevention. Obviously, the most useful would be to completely avoid the development of brain abnormalities. It is true that in some situations, such as Down's Syndrome, by the time one is able to detect the presence of the abnormality, irreversible damage has been done. Faced with this, many couples prefer to terminate pregnancies - that is their choice. Even in Down's Syndrome, we would much rather be able to prevent the formation of an abnormal embryo, but at the moment we don't know how to do that.

Art room

I am looking for information on how to adapt art room equipment and furniture for people with disabilities and special needs.

I would be grateful to hear from anybody who has been involved in a similar project or from disabled artists who have overcome the difficulties.

Margaret Langridge
Occupational Therapist
Paddington Printshop
1 Elgin Avenue, London W9

Tough measures needed on orange badge abuse

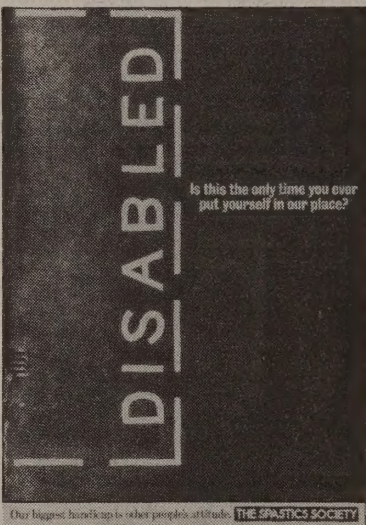
I have been very interested in the reaction that the parking space poster has generated (DN, October).

It seems to offer itself for "windscreening" offending vehicles, but beware the danger of damage to vehicles and oneself in trying to reach wiperblades from a wheelchair, and the subsequent abuse from the said driver at all and any disabled person. Also, think of the amount of wasted print dumped on our pavements and it won't be the driver at fault but The Spastics Society for providing the ammunition.

It may be a better idea to have the poster available as, say, postcards and button badges. This way a statement is made, the cost recovered and some people may then think twice before parking.

Maybe the time is right to bring pressure to bear on the whole subject of parking as the Government has made the first move by asking for comments on the Orange Badge Scheme. Surely the general public who abuse our parking spaces should be heavily penalised and shamed for doing so, for example, a fine of £50, an endorsement and a report in the local press.

There are many places in the country where cars parked in orange bays will rarely be ticketed. For example, in Brighton in 1985 there was a Datsun saloon that had been abandoned in



The Spastics Society's parking poster.

a bay for 3 weeks before it was moved. Last year, on a Saturday afternoon in Brighton, of cars in disabled bays only mine had a badge, and when I spoke to one of the drivers I was shown two vertical fingers as my reply. The policeman I spoke to confirmed that it was an offence and would be seen to immediately.

On my return an hour later they were still parked whilst the owners enjoyed their drinks in a nearby bar.

The same applies any sunny day in Hove behind the King Alfred Centre: the bays are easy parking for anyone swimming, fishing, windsurfing or eating lunch between calls or dog walking.

I am not picking out Brighton and Hove as worst offenders, only to illustrate that it is the "normal" practice by some people in contempt of our pathetically few parking places against the vast numbers available to people with no mobility problems.

It is now fairly accepted that 1 in 10 of the population has mobility problems, so should not the same ratio be met in providing spaces?

Frank Adams
17 Oakenfield
Burgess Hill, West Sussex

(sic)

DN's diary column
by Simon Crompton

Icy

Last month's trial run for the forthcoming Ice Age provoked a welcome stand-down from Mrs Thatcher on severe weather payments to elderly and disabled people (though £5 a week doesn't seem anything to make a mammoth song and dance about). But social security minister John Major seemed determined to convince the public of the probity of his current scheme, even as temperatures plummeted to minus seven. While the world and his husky has always known the benefit as severe weather payment, Mr Major insisted on referring to it as *exceptionally* severe weather payment in every interview.

Communal

For all the admirable ideals of care in the community, it is perhaps just as well to be brought to earth every now and then by the "more loonies next door" attitude of much of the general public. Writing in *Charity*, Terry Palmer described the reaction of some Southend-on-Sea residents to MENCAP's proposed community home. "If the council gives planning permission for *them*, I'm putting a six foot fence round my property the next day," said one public-spirited soul. Another opponent demanded to know "what times they will be let out into the streets so I can bring my children inside".

Unrestricted

January was a big month for small people, who seem to have been the subject of saturation media coverage. First there was news that Danny Bamford, the man who introduced the controversial sport of "dwarf-throwing" to these shores, is booking clubs in England to demonstrate "dwarf skittles". This involves strapping a 4 foot 4 inch Lenny the Giant to a skateboard and bowling him headfirst into the skittles, or alternatively suspending him from a harness and swinging him in. Labour MP Frank Field has called for the sport to be banned.

We've also had the BBC2 documentary "Short Stories" on people with growth defects, a *Guardian* feature on a woman and a child with restricted growth, the news that the Cumberland Hotel in London is opening a suite dedicated to Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, and a piece in *You* magazine on Sir William Shakespeare (yes, that is his real name and he is related) and his political activist son Tom, both of whom have achondroplasia. The latter was headlined "Small Wonders" which seems singularly inappropriate when almost everything Sir William and Tom said pointed to their similarities to everyone else.

Tannoyed

Heard over the tannoy at the Boat Show last month: "Will all drivers of disabled cars please go to the disabled car park and remove them at once." I find it heartwarming to know that *someone* looks after the hobbling Hondas, the tyreless Triumphs, the floorless Fords and the potholed parking spaces of this world.

Contributions, please, to DN

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Action on McColl

continued from page 1

The administrative changes made to the ALAC system since the report have been described as "cosmetic" by campaigners, and members of the working party have been concerned about the lack of any formal DHSS response to the recommendations.

But the DHSS have now confirmed that John Major, Minister for Social Security and the Disabled, will announce plans soon.

Professor Ian McColl, who has been in contact with Mr Major, told *Disability Now* that he was "very optimistic". "I see it as a real possibility that much of the report will be implemented."

John Hannam, MP, secretary of the All Party Disablement Group, expects an announcement in the Commons this month. "The All Party Group is supporting one recommendation in particular - for the indoor/outdoor powered chair, which McColl put forward as being cost-effective," he said. "We have grounds to believe that the arguments for it have been taken on board by the Minister."

The DHSS's immediate response to the McColl report was to set up a disablement services

branch, to decide on a new programme for developing services. Last month, answering a written question from Jack Ashley, MP, the minister said that proposals were also being developed to devolved more responsibility to ALAC management at a local level, and to improve transport to and from the centres.

Charles Smith, a persistent critic of ALACs, says that he has seen minor improvements in the artificial limb service over the last months, but he remained sceptical that a fundamental reorganisation was likely soon.

★ The Government last month secured a pledge from its contract artificial limb manufacturer, J E Hanger, that services to disabled people would not be affected by a decision to move most of production away from the main Roehampton plant.

The company's decision comes in the midst of a long industrial dispute at Roehampton, which started when 300 workers were sacked and has left an estimated backlog of 112 fittings.

Responding to questions from shadow health minister Frank Dobson and Jack Ashley, MP, John Major again rejected calls for the Government to help secure a settlement.

Will the HEC lose its independence?

As Norman Fowler, the social services secretary, announced new regulations last month which will make the Health Education Council a part of the National Health Service, concern at the move grew amongst professional bodies, voluntary organisations and health unions.

The Health Education Council (HEC), an independent Government-funded body which advises the public on dangers to health such as drinking and smoking, is to be reconstituted so that it is directly accountable to the Government. As a Special Health Authority,

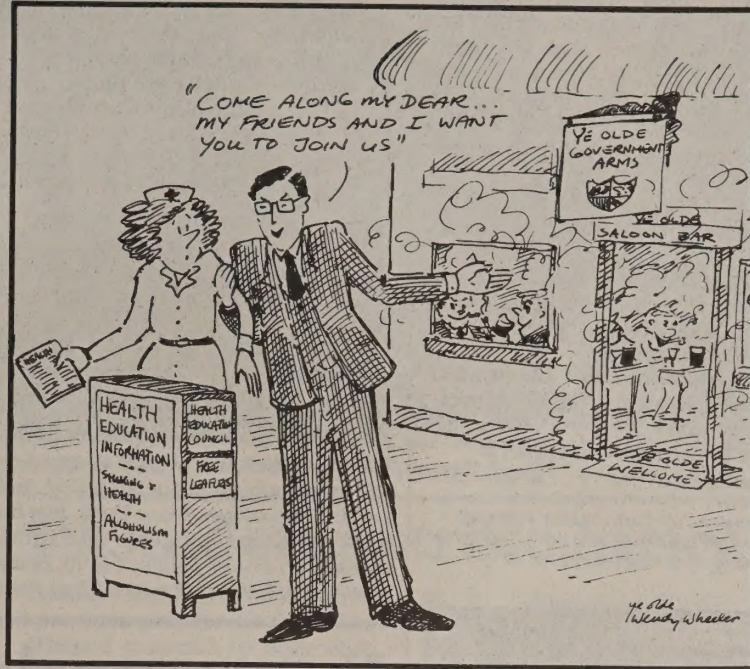
the new body will take responsibility for the Government's education campaign on AIDS, working within the health service as well as with the general public. Its budget is expected to be considerably larger than the HEC's current £10 million a year.

But there are fears that the HEC may lose its independent stance.

"We have admired the independence of this body from the Government and its willingness to criticise the Government when necessary," said Pamela Taylor, head of public affairs at the BMA. "But we are very concerned that this will stop."

Shirley Goodwin, general secretary of the Health Visitors' Association and a former member of the HEC, said: "It seems more than a coincidence that an organisation which is pushing hard for government changes in the tobacco and drink industries has now got to be accountable to the Government."

The Association of Metropolitan Authorities has warned Norman Fowler in a letter that the change will lead to less effective monitoring of health issues.



MONTH IN PARLIAMENT



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Severe weather payments: warming to a theme

Following a storm of criticism over the new severe weather payments scheme, John Major, Minister for Social Security, announced an important change in the Commons on 20 January.

In future the temperature must average 0°C (freezing) for one week instead of -1.5°C.

Michael Meacher, Labour's social security spokesperson, welcomed the relaxation of the regulations but thought that it had come too late for many people.

He criticised the restrictive nature of the regulations and called for an automatic payment during the winter months for more vulnerable groups of people. Such a scheme would put an end to the arbitrary and uncertain arrangements that exist at the moment.

Drawing attention to the possibility of long backlogs for claimants at social security offices, he asked how long it would take for everyone to get their payments.

Replying, John Major assured the House that claims would be dealt with as a matter of priority. He claimed that taking other heating benefits into account, Britain now has "the most generous system of assistance with heating that we have ever had in this country."

If you are concerned about how to meet your heating costs, *The Spastics Society* has a free guide, *Meeting Heating Costs*. Send a large SAE to the Campaigns Department.

Speech therapists in short supply

"I am the parent of a handicapped child who is three and a half years old. Since he's been coming for speech therapy, John has learnt to play and talk". However, "We had to wait 5 months for an appointment."

This was one of the cases used by David Alton, Liberal MP for Liverpool, who raised the shortage of speech therapists and their low pay during an adjournment debate on 19 January.

He was particularly concerned that services in Liverpool were well below the national average. And the national average itself, he said provides an inadequate service for 3 million communication impaired people, of whom 800,000 have severe communication disorders.

There was also the problem of who was supposed to provide therapy services. He cited the recent case of an Oxfordshire parent who had lost her bid to get the local education authority to provide speech therapy under the 1981 Education Act (see *DN*, December).

The Oxfordshire case had been a classic demarcation dispute between the local education

Mail Newspapers



Edwina Currie

tion authority and the local health authority, he said. Patients in the UK should be given the same statutory rights as those in the United States.

Edwina Currie, replying for the Government, said that expenditure on speech therapy has grown over nine-fold since 1974 with a corresponding increase in the number of speech therapists. By 1985 there were 2,790 speech therapists employed by the NHS.

Alarm over the situation in Liverpool was exaggerated, she

said. It was up to individual health authorities to decide how to use their resources, so provision would vary depending on the needs of the local population.

It was appropriate that speech therapy should be provided by the NHS as the bulk of patients and the greatest need will come from that area, she said. It was a long time since speech therapists had been employed in great numbers by the education service.

She was reluctant to comment on the Oxfordshire case because it is going to the Court of Appeal.

Maternity and funeral grants to be replaced

John Major has had to bring forward a new Bill to remedy drafting mistakes in the 1986 Social Security Act. The Bill, and the section of the Act it amends, will end the statutory right to maternity and funeral grants and replace it with means tested loans. For example, if you have savings of more than £500 that could disqualify you from claiming funeral expenses; payments may be reduced by the amount of savings you have above £500. An absolute condition is that claimants must be receiving supplementary benefit.

Michael Meacher, Labour's social security spokesperson, said that abolishing universal grants was going to increase pressure on pensioners to build up savings for their funeral expenses and thus disqualify themselves from severe weather payments by breaking the £500 limit.

Lewis Carter Jones (Labour) talked of how low weight pre-term babies may be born with handicaps and low birth weight can be predicted. Would there be enough flexibility, he asked, to give increased maternity grants to mothers at risk?

John Major replied that the amount of maternity grant for those who qualified would be £80, but this would not solve the problem Lewis Carter Jones had identified.

He defended the changes, arguing that they would target help at those who needed it most.

Brian Lamb

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First purpose-built taxi for wheelchair users

A new taxi specially built to carry passengers in wheelchairs should be on the roads in London this month, offering disabled travellers an alternative to the FX4W cab conversion.

The Metrocab, built by Metro-Cammell Weymann, can carry about 95 per cent of disabled people in wheelchairs. Already over 40 of the cabs have been ordered and the company has received many inquiries from Dial-a-Rides and London hospitals.

The Metrocab is the first taxi to be purpose-built to carry wheelchairs. It has wider, higher doors, opening to 90 degrees, a low floor level to make loading from the kerb easier, and a permanent space for securing the chair with an independent safety belt for the occupant. Ramps are carried in the boot for places where there is no kerb.

Disability organisations including RADAR and GLAD were consulted at the design stage. Bert Massie, assistant director of

RADAR, who uses a wheelchair, tried out the new cab. He said he was very pleased to see a growing choice for disabled people in the crucial area of local transport.

"I think disabled groups should now be persuading their local authorities that any new taxis in their area should be accessible, and they should only issue licenses to those that are. Now that there is more than one company making accessible taxis this is possible," he said.

Geoffrey Chater, development and services manager of Metro-Cammell Weymann, is confident that the Metrocab will catch on with taxi drivers.

● In addition to the list printed in *DN*, January, **FX4W wheelchair taxis** are now also available in the following places:

Birmingham Mr P Clackett 021 5543018

Liverpool Mr Garforth 061 4296049

Newcastle Target Taxis 0670 736160

Torbay Mr B Ling 0803 213521



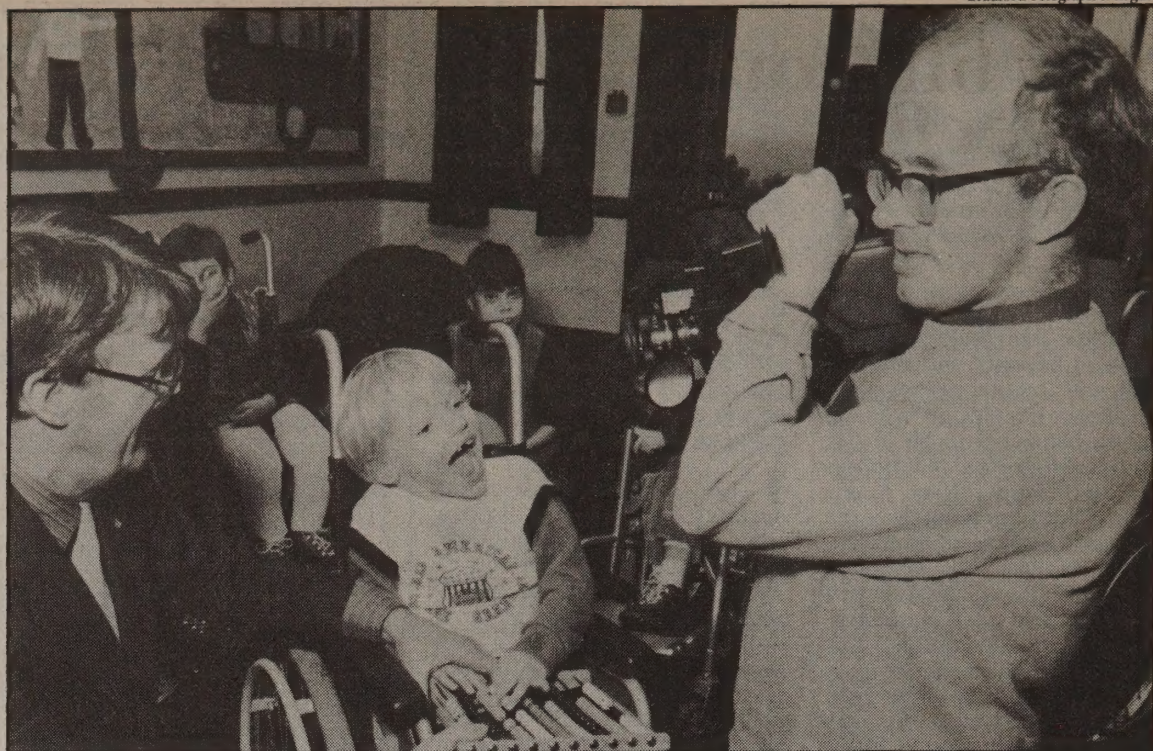
A campaigner remembered

People with disabilities from all over the country attended a memorial and thanksgiving service held on 14 January at the Rosary Church, London, for Rosemary Dawson-Shepherd, whose life was always a manifestation of the spirit which fired The Spastics Society.

It was her courage and fight for the dignity and pride of people with cerebral palsy which in-

spired her father, Ian Dawson-Shepherd, one of the founders.

Father John Turner officiated. The address was given by William Hargreaves, and the lessons were read by Sir John Mills and David Jacobs. The director of The Spastics Society, John Cox read a short passage from *The Pilgrim's Progress*. The solo, "Over the Rainbow", was sung by Maryetta Midgley.



What a picture! Leslie Caley (right), who has cerebral palsy, demonstrates the £1,200 video/tape recorder he bought for disabled children after a 43 mile sponsored walk between York and Scarborough. Leslie, who comes from York, has had 14 operations on his right foot and is in pain when he walks, but in 4 years he has raised nearly £3,000 for disabled people through his sponsored bikes. Leslie presented the camera to Frank Jagger (left), headmaster of Hawksworth Hall school for children with cerebral palsy, where teachers will make films for education and the children's entertainment.

Not so much messing about in boats

I went to my first Boat Show last month. My experience is limited, but I still found it exhilarating and exciting.

Is it really practical for someone in a wheelchair? It was not easy to find out from the Boat Show.

Boatline was my first stop. Organised by the British Marine Industries Federation, it is a 24-hour telephone service linked to a computer data-bank. From it I could find out about

● the Challenger, a specially adapted trimaran, run by the Royal Yachting Association's Seamanship Foundation

● narrow boats adapted and run by the Spinal Injuries Association

● the Blind Sailing Association, administered by the Royal Yachting Association

● Jubilee Sailing Trust Holidays

● the British Disabled Water Ski Association

All except the Spinal Injuries Association had stands and were very helpful. (The Stars Organ-

isation for Spastics was also there launching its National Raffle.)

Earls Court itself is accessible to wheelchairs. But I couldn't try any boats. Most of them were displayed in positions which made access impossible.

Boating might be outside the pockets of many people, but it would have been nice to try a few.

Chris Davies



Chris Davies talks to Charles Smith of Boatline at the Show.

★ The first World Championship for disabled water skiers, hosted by the British Disabled Water Ski Association, is to be held at the Tony Edge Centre, Heron Lake, Wraysbury, Middx 24-26 July. Teams are expected from all over the world to compete in various events including slalom, jump and tricks, each disability having its own events.

British Disabled Water Ski Association, c/o Mrs M D Edge, 18 Greville Park Ave, Ashted, Surrey KT21 2QS, tel: (03722) 73046.

Boatline, tel: (0932) 45890.

Royal Yachting Association Seamanship Foundation, Victoria Way, Woking, Surrey GU12 1EQ, tel: (04862) 5022.

Jubilee Sailing Trust, Atlantic Road, Eastern Docks, Southampton, Hants SO1 1GD, tel: (0703) 31388.

Spinal Injuries Association, 5 Crowndale Road, London NW1, tel: 01-485 4227.

Theatres fail to apply themselves to access issue

Amateur theatres in the Manchester area have been slow in coming forward to claim their share of a £15,000 fund to improve access, administered by the Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People.

The GMCDP invited applications from theatres last year for grants to improve access by, for example, installing ramps and disabled toilets. But by the closing date on 31 December only 7 theatres had applied.

"We have to find out why more theatres have not come forward," said Ken Lumb, chairman of GMCDP. "I suspect a lot of them function from old premises and don't realise what can be done to make them accessible."

He admitted he did not know how many amateur theatres there are in the area which would be eligible for grants. The Greater Manchester Drama Federation lists over 70 amateur groups as members, but many of these do not own their own theatres.

The grant offer was publicised in the drama federation's magazine, the local papers and in dis-

ability magazines.

A second invitation to apply for a grant is likely to be issued. If the response is still poor the offer may be extended to improving access in other buildings, said Mr Lumb.

The £15,000 was originally entrusted to the GMCDP by the Greater Manchester Council before it was abolished on 1 April, 1986. Mr Lumb agreed it was unusual for a council to hand over money to a disability organisation for an access scheme but "it was a unique situation because of the abolition".

"In many ways we are the appropriate people to be giving out this money," he said.

The GMCDP will decide how the money is to be allocated to each theatre in consultation with local disability groups.

It had applied for an additional £10,000 from the remaining funds left by the Greater Manchester Council, in anticipation of a big demand from theatres. According to Mr Lumb the coalition is unlikely to be given the money now as the response has been so poor.

Join hands!

Disabled people around the country are being asked to join in a unique national demonstration of public concern about mass unemployment.

A human chain of 300,000 people stretching from London to Liverpool is planned for 3 May. It will be called Hands Across Britain.

According to co-ordinator Molly Meacher, the chain symbolises one tenth of the skills and humanity waiting for a chance to contribute to the nation's well-being.

Jimmy Savile, the Hands Across Britain President, is organising Hands Across Stoke Mandeville at the National Spinal Injuries Centre on the same day, to highlight the particular unemployment problems faced by people with disabilities. All other centres for disabled people within the United Kingdom are being encouraged to organise similar events.

If you need any more information or want advice on organising an event, contact Petra Griffiths, Hands Across Britain, Southbank House, Black Prince Road, London SE1 5SJ. Tel: 01-582 8256/01-735 0778.

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New bill could end secret files and shambled lives

Simon Crompton reports

At the age of 46, Elizabeth is just beginning to come to terms with the disability she has had all her life. It was only 3 years ago that she discovered by chance that she had cerebral palsy.

If doctors had been less evasive and medical records more accessible, her whole life might have been different. "I was unable to make proper decisions, to fully understand my own problems and get the proper help I desperately needed," she says. "Doctors had always treated me as a child."

Although she had major surgery for her condition when she was 19, Elizabeth was never told what was wrong. When she decided to register as disabled and was seen by Department of Health and Social Security doctors, they refused Elizabeth's request to see a copy of the report. Another doctor later told her she had "dislocated hips".

She was naturally perplexed when she was sent to a neurologist and her treatment seemed

more appropriate to a nervous complaint.

It was only when she appealed against a decision not to give her mobility allowance that Elizabeth was sent copies of her medical reports by the DHSS.

"I felt my life had been a shambles through no fault of my own," she says. "Now I know what I have I find I can handle things much better, knowing that the drugs I was prescribed weren't for a mental but a physical condition."

Elizabeth's case is just one of many being used by the Campaign for Freedom of Information to back a new Private Mem-

bers' Bill, introduced by Liberal MP Archy Kirkwood. It will have its Second Reading on 20 February.

The Access to Personal Files Bill will give people the opportunity to see their medical records, school records, social services records, employment files and other records held by public authorities. If there are errors, individuals will be able to correct them.

A recent MORI opinion poll showed that there is overwhelming public support for access to most files, and Archy Kirkwood says that the Bill has the backing of 150 MPs, including 54 Conservatives. More than 85 national organisations have indicated their support.

"This measure affects every man, woman and child in the country," said Des Wilson, chairman of the Campaign for Freedom of Information, at the launch of the Bill in December. "The Bill does enhance democracy," said Archy Kirkwood, "and I don't think it is going to cost that much money to implement."

"It is rare for a bill to be introduced into the House of Commons with such a consensus behind it. I am hoping that the appropriate Ministers will indicate their support so that it can have a smoother passage to legislation."

Tom Clarke's Disabled Persons' Bill was a Private Members' Bill which successfully became law last year. But that was first in the ballot for Private Members' Bills, while Archy Kirkwood's came sixth. This means it has less chance of getting royal assent.

If you want further information, or if you have experienced difficulties because of inaccurate or inaccessible records, contact Maurice Frankel, The Campaign for Freedom of Information, 3 Endsleigh Street, London WC1H 0DD. Tel: 01-278 9686.

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Pat Rock wins special Snowdon award



Pat Rock with her "crystal" ball, Lord Snowdon (right) and Andrew Brearley-Smith, director, Action Research for the Crippled Child.

The 1987 Special Snowdon Award has been won by Patricia Rock.

Presenting her with a "crystal" ball in which she could read of her award, Lord Snowdon said: "It isn't a financial award, just a small token to express appreciation and admiration of someone who contributes considerably to encouraging integration and equal opportunities for disabled people, and focuses public attention and interest on their needs, rights and abilities."

Pat had polio at the age of 3 and is paralysed from the waist down. In the 1970s she broke the Commonwealth Paraplegic Backstroke record and went on to found 2 sports clubs for disabled children.

She has been involved with the Crossroads Care Attendant Scheme, the Disablement Sports Association, the Access Support Group and Sisters Against Disablement.

In 1981 she set up the Community Aides Programme in Islington, now also in Wandsworth (see DN December) which enables physically disabled people to live in the community with the help of people who have a mental handicap.

At present Pat works with Colin Low (a previous winner) in the London Boroughs' Disability Resource Team.

"I think this award shows recognition for the Community Aides Programme at a wider level," she said. "We would like to see it spreading around London and beyond, but money is the main problem."

19 students strike lucky

Awards totalling over £21,000 have been given to 19 physically disabled students to help with the extra expenses they will incur at college because of their disability.

Presenting his annual awards last month, Lord Snowdon said the capital available had again increased as a result of the generosity of personal friends and organisations. Among those he thanked were Action Research for the Crippled Child which administers the scheme and the National Westminster Bank which hosted the presentation.

The awards this year ranged from £400 to £2,000.

Barbara Hood, who is partially paralysed and lost her right arm, received £400 to help her to

as a furniture restorer in Chichester and Lyn Hughes from Dyfed, Wales will use her £1,000 to buy an electronic typewriter and to help with other expenses on her secretarial course.

Ann Blake, who damaged her spine in a road accident, is training as a beautician. This month she takes her ITEC diploma and then, with the support of her beauty school, in Ilford, Essex, she hopes to develop beauty courses for disabled people.

Ann was one of 5 students who got to the presentation despite the weather. Stuck in a car on a snowy road, she was not giving up. "I wound down the window and shouted to a lorry driver. He gave us a lift."

The full list of winners is below left.

The deadline for next year's awards is 31 May. Write to the Secretary, Snowdon Award Scheme, Action Research for the Crippled Child, Vincent House, North Parade, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 2DA.



Ann Blake receives her certificate. She wants to become a beautician.

wards obtaining a masters degree in Linguistics at Manchester University, and four severely disabled students, Helen Browne, Brian Davies, Martin Rayson and Craig Newport, each received £2,000 for equipment and extra help while they are studying for degrees.

The awards do not only go to people at university. John Smith received £500 to help him train

1987 winners

Shafiq Ahmed from Walsall, West Midlands
Ann Blake from Brentwood, Essex
Simon Boon from Doncaster
Helen Browne from Manchester
Fiona Campbell from London
Denis Cole from Whitstable, Kent
Brian Davies from Stevenage
Karen Davies from Ipswich
Barbara Hood from Manchester
Lyn Hughes from Dyfed, Wales
Alasdair Moon from Galashiels, Scotland
Craig Newport from Bournemouth
Jeffrey Newall from Wirral
Donald O'Neal from Chippenham
Jacqueline Parkes from Birmingham
Mark Rayson from Llanelli, Wales
Priyesh Shah from Edgware
John Smith from Barnby-in-the-Willows, Newark
Ruth Whapples from Birmingham

AIDS info

Thousands of blind people will now be able to read the Government's leaflet on AIDS, printed in braille by the Royal National Institute for the Blind.

More than 7,000 of the braille leaflets will be posted out to the homes of visually disabled people this month. RNIB has already brailled three other leaflets on AIDS by the Health Education Council, the Department of Employment and the Terence Higgins Trust. All are available on tape also.

For copies of braille leaflets or tapes contact RNIB, 224 Great Portland Street, London WIN.

★ Blind Students at the Queen Alexandra College in Birmingham are having alarms fitted to their white sticks after a spate of attacks by muggers.

The cane, which emits an ear-piercing whistle when the top is pressed down, is thought to be the first of its kind in Britain. It was developed in the college's workshop.

Uncared for

People with mental handicaps have unnecessary illnesses because they are not taken to the doctor often enough, according to a Swansea GP.

In a survey published in the October issue of the *Journal of the Royal College of General Practitioners*, Dr Gwyn Howells found that three quarters of the mentally handicapped people at a Swansea training centre were in need of routine medical care. Untreated problems include high blood pressure which could cause a stroke, and hearing, sight and heart defects.


Out of 151 mentally handicapped adults, Dr Howells found that four people had untreated hernias, two had untreated chronic bronchitis and two had untreated urinary infections.

Dr Gwyn Howells said that mentally handicapped people are not getting adequate attention because they have difficulty communicating their needs, and because GPs are not aware of their needs.

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Disabled People's International is 5 years old this year. Rachel Hurst explains how it started and what is happening now

In 1980 at a Rehabilitation International (RI) Congress in Winnipeg there were over 200 disabled delegates. The other 4,000 delegates were professionals in the field of rehabilitation - doctors, paramedics and workers in charitable institutions run for the welfare of disabled people.

Despite being experts in the field it was the first time that so many disabled people had attended an RI congress.

At a barbecue at the start of the congress, these disabled people talked together. They very quickly discovered that they had many experiences in common. They found that whatever services they received, they had little or no control over their own lives and only in a very few countries was it even recognised that disabled people had rights at all - only needs.

The Council of RI did not wish to acknowledge the demand of the disabled delegates that they should be heard and have proper influence on decisions. So the disabled people went back to their own countries. A year later 400 of them met in Singapore and Disabled People's International (DPI) was born.

Now, 5 years on, DPI has a membership of national organisations of disabled people from 65 countries and contacts in over 100 more, as well as con-

A voice to be reckoned with

Ann Hills, Social Work Today



Rachel Hurst with Henry Enns (right), DPI's chair, and Joshua Malinga, deputy chair, last year.

sultative status with the United Nations.

Through DPI, disabled people all over the world are coming together and sharing problems and struggles, united in voicing their right to full and equal participation in society.

The World Health Organisation estimates that approximately 500 million people are disabled. 300 million live in developing countries and probably only 1 per cent have access to any kind of appropriate care, rehabilitation or service.

All over the world societies have been planned and de-

veloped without regarding the needs of disabled people. The result is that disabled people are segregated and often prevented from exercising even the most fundamental human rights



as laid down by the United Nations. This separateness both from society and each other means that they have no in-

fluence on decisions affecting their own lives.

Because of the lack of even the most basic forms of support or care, DPI's main concern is the situation in developing countries. Funded by international aid and development agencies, it has run self-help programmes in Africa and South America and provided technical assistance and co-ordination for projects which have given disabled people control over their lives.

It has become clear that the right to control and influence cannot be gauged by whether or not a country is developed.

In many under-developed countries the right of disabled people to equality is recognised, despite the harsh reality that often equality means sharing starvation, homelessness and poverty with your able-bodied peers. People are not segregated because they are different, nor do they get less of the communal cake because they are impaired.

In Marrakesh, for instance, which I visited 2 years ago, I saw more disabled people than any other place I have been to with the possible exception of California. And it was assumed that I would go everywhere and see everything.

In India, on the other hand, disabled people, if they survive at all, are segregated. The majority of organisations concerned with their welfare are run by able-bodied people and are not properly effective.

Control of service provision by statutory and voluntary organisations can segregate disabled people either within special institutions or in the confines of their own homes because of inadequate and inappropriate aids and an inaccessible environment. The European Region of DPI illustrates this very clearly, and is by far the least represented region.

Organisations of disabled people are not properly resourced



by many European governments and therefore are unable to be part of the international movement. Many of those which do exist are struggling so hard in their own countries to gain recognition as the direct voice of disabled people, to develop independent living programmes and to lobby for better services, that they have little energy for DPI - or knowledge of it.

Conversely, the European Region within Rehabilitation International is one of the strongest. It represents the traditional approach to disability as a series of needs that can only be satisfied by setting up extensive and expensive professional structures over which disabled people have no control and no choice. These professional structures of service provision have convinced the world that disabled people in Europe are better off than anywhere else.

Now, through DPI, disabled people are able to say something different. They are able to illustrate that in terms of equal participation, control and influence, disabled people in many countries in Europe are among the worst off.

This divergence of views on service provision will soon be documented by both the United Nations and DPI in mid-term evaluations of the UN Decade of Disabled Persons and the World Programme of Action.

In Britain, most people are unaware that we are half-way through the Decade, or that it exists at all.

Fewer still are aware of the importance of the World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons.

Produced in full consultation with DPI and adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 1982, the Programme of Action seeks to promote the Decade and its aim of ensuring "effective measures for prevention of disability, rehabilitation and the realisation of the goals of 'full participation' of disabled persons in social life and development of 'equality'".

This comprehensive document should be as readily available as the Highway Code.



As well as fighting the discriminations imposed by society, DPI is working to fight those within disability.

At the second DPI Congress in 1985, disabled women made much the same demands to be represented and consulted as disabled people had made at Winnipeg.

The demands were heard and resolutions passed to ensure greater opportunities for representation by women on the Council. A special committee was set up to actively encourage women's awareness and build up their confidence.

Efforts are also being made to ensure the participation of people with learning difficulties, young disabled people and the sensorily impaired.

Equality should be for everybody. To achieve this it is important that disabled people should come together nationally and internationally.

The British Council of Organisations of Disabled People (with 35 member organisations) is the UK member of DPI and one of the founders. It has gained tremendous strength from knowing that it is part of a universal struggle.

Rachel Hurst is chair of the British Council of Organisations of Disabled People, St Mary's Church, Greenlaw Street, London SE18 5AR.

The World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons is available, free, from the UN Information Centre, 20 Buckingham Gate, London SW1.

Boccia!

A jeu that's absolutely sans frontiers!

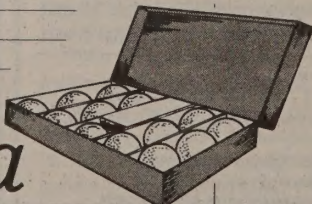
It is generally believed that the Italian aristocracy introduced the game of Boccia to the Florentine court in the XVI century.

The Leisure Services Department of The Spastics Society - in conjunction with Newton Products - will be re-introducing it, to you, on March 21st and 22nd at the Wyndley Leisure Centre, Sutton Coldfield.

The renaissance of Boccia is of special interest to anyone connected with sport for people with disability. Because, while it has existed as a game in its own right for centuries, it adapts particularly well to the needs of the disabled sportsman or sportswoman. A fact which is underlined by its acceptance as one of the major disciplines in the 1988 Seoul Olympics.

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"I don't know whether you know any handicapped people. They don't like making their own minds up. They like being told what to do."

This was said to me by a member of staff at a sheltered work centre for people with disabilities.

I was talking to her about a pile of applications we had received for one of the three workshops on sexuality for people with disabilities being run by the Family Planning Association in Bournemouth, Manchester and Blarney, Co. Cork.

I was checking to see whether the applicants were choosing to come knowing the objectives and wanting to achieve them, or were being sent by staff. This was important because in the workshops they would be looking at their own sexuality and relationships and what they might do to improve their own lives, and then going on to consider general barriers to sexual fulfilment for people with disabilities.

I didn't know and during the workshops I certainly did not meet any "handicapped people". I met people who were very able and competent who happened to have disabilities.

What emerged was that people with disabilities were handicapped as far as their sexuality was concerned by people such as the woman quoted above – by the public, professionals and parents seeing them as irresponsible and asexual children.

Handicaps were increased by ignorance or refusal to recognise their sexual needs and by general barriers to full independent living.

To enjoy your sexuality and to form satisfying personal relationships you need to be independent, to be mobile, to have access to places of entertainment.

You need to feel in control of your own life, and to feel that you can take risks and be responsible for sorting out any mistakes yourself. You need to have information about how your body works and you need to have been given, or have given yourself permission to find all the many ways there are of giving and receiving love and sexual or sensual pleasure.

During the workshops 17 men and 12 women aged from 19 to 60 with various types and levels of disability considered these issues, first for themselves and then in general. The content of each workshop differed, as individuals and the group followed up their own needs.

"I was amazed to find out just how ignorant I am on the subject of sexuality in the most general terms."

The first two days of the workshops were not recorded because the groups were looking at and discussing personal issues.

On the final day attention moved from what was needed and could be done individually and with support from the group, to what lessons could be learned from the shared experiences.

The participants decided their agenda and began "report-making", discussing and then dictating their conclusions and recommendations. These have been amalgamated into one report for the World Heath Organisation which sponsored the whole study.

Sexuality and the way it is expressed is a reflection of the way we are as people, how we live, how we feel about ourselves – hence the emphasis on the context in which people with disabilities live their lives.



Students at Beaumont College have the freedom to be adult.

"If I am treated as a child, how can I be sexual?"

Valentine's Day is an annual reminder to many disabled people that they are different. At 3 workshops sponsored last year by the World Health Organisation and run by the Family Planning Association, disabled people discussed personal relationships and the barriers to sexual fulfilment. Mary Porter reports

Being treated as a child by parents, professionals and members of the public seems to be a universal experience. It can range from the patronising put down: "Oh, you are so brave" to the overprotective.

"I was told to keep away from able-bodied girls! They kept saying 'You'll only be hurt'"

There can be total ignorance or rejection of rights to self-determination: "They have case conferences about us every month. We are not *allowed* to be there nor are we told the results." There is even downright invasion of privacy and assault: "When my boyfriend goes home they examine me." (Any examination without consent can only be assault.)

Residential care in particular seems to show up worst in its treatment of people as children.

"You get told off if you want to go to the loo at the wrong time," said one person.

"I only have a bath when I am at home. I don't like to bother staff at the hostel," said another.

If you cannot have a bath or even go to the loo with dignity whenever you feel it is necessary, what chance do you have of having a sexual relationship?

Children with disabilities get much less sex education than other children (and sex education in most mainstream schools leaves much to be desired). Often because of lack of opportunities to go behind the bike sheds they are less able to extend their education informally in the way that other children can.

Also, as they can easily have an overly dependent relationship with parents, teenagers with disabilities may not develop the necessary confidence to break

away, challenge where necessary parental values, and develop their own value systems. This means that they can grow up as adults with attitudes to sexuality that are much more restrictive than those in the rest of society.

"No-one ever told me that it is ok to masturbate. I have always thought it was wrong," admitted one participant.

Alternatively, young people with disabilities who do get out into the world may soon learn to put up a front, covering up their ignorance or fear of rejection with a show of bravado.

People becoming disabled in adult life face an enormous transition from being sexual adults, to being "handicapped" people for whom sex is not supposed to be important – or that seems to be the attitude of many of the professionals with whom they come into contact. While there are a few remarkable exceptions, most seem unable to deal with sexuality with sensitivity or even accurate knowledge.

It seems as if professionals see sex as being about being able to get an erection and achieve penetration – and if that's not possible then that is an end of sexuality. Honest information is very limited.

Being dependent on care, even if you live reasonably independently, can seriously restrict possibilities.

"I have to go to bed at 6 pm because that is when the district nurse comes to put me to bed."

Being dependent on others for mobility and transport again limits possibilities. Unless people have sufficient income they cannot employ the flexible care essential for real independent living and adult functioning.

For those who are already married or in permanent relationships when becoming disabled, real strain can be put on the relationship by the expectation that the partner will take on the caring role.

"We married before I was disabled. Our bodies were sexual and we used them to express loving and caring. Now I have to say 'please remove my tampon' or 'please put in a suppository'. This changes his view of my body – he becomes detached and not turned on by it – he cannot see it as sexual."

This change in relationship combined with actual changes in sexual possibilities can make the stress unbearable, but counselling services to help both partners clarify needs, feelings, etc, are few and far between. Sexual counsellors are usually not available in specialist services for people with disabilities and general counsellors in the community are either uninformed or inaccessible.

The whole issue of accessibility is another strong feature of the report. The aggravation caused by the stupidity of planning and the inaccessibility of public buildings and places of entertainment hardly needs pointing out to readers of *Disability Now*. The report makes the point very strongly that all these barriers to free, independent, normal living have a serious effect on sexuality, relationships and human living and loving.

This short article cannot include all the areas covered nor all the recommendations. They are very wide-ranging and tackle the general conditions affecting sexuality as well as sexuality itself.

They cover access, mobility, and aids to independent living, stating that these should be there as of right, not concessions – people with disabilities should not be treated as special cases, but as part of the wide range of normal diversity.

People on the receiving end of care should have control of it – they should be the employers not passive, grateful recipients and for this they must have necessary funding.

"Care staff in residential centres must have more training so that the communication between staff and resident is on an adult to adult level."

The report in fact recommends further training in sexuality and disability for most professionals with whom people with disabilities come into contact. Considerable attention is paid to information and counselling.

Information on sexuality and on specific disabilities should be universally available in the community, in hospitals, rehabilitation centres, etc. At the very least, all agencies should have access to lists of available resources and services.

Members of organisations associated with specific disabilities must see that information is produced regarding their disability and sexuality.

People with disability should have access to specific counselling on sexuality. It must be available but never ever imposed. People with disabilities should also train as counsellors.

Many recommendations cover the things people with disabilities can do to improve matters for themselves. These include working in organisations and self-help groups to effect change, going out into schools and the community to raise public awareness of disability issues, and finding personal ways of overcoming barriers to sexual development.

The World Heath Organisation report will be published in the spring. For further information contact Mary Porter, Training and Development Officer, Family Planning Association Centre, 8 Fairfields Road, Basingstoke, Hants, RG21 3DR.

A new booklet, Sexuality and Disability – a matter that concerns all of us by the Swedish specialist Inger Nordqvist, aims to provide basic information for staff training courses and adult study groups. From The Swedish Institute for the Handicapped, Box 303, S-161 26 Bromma, Sweden. Price: SEK 35 (via a bank draft).

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Integration in the on the playing field

Scotland's first unit designed to integrate visually impaired pupils into mainstream secondary education celebrates its third birthday this month. So successful has it been that other Scottish education authorities who have visited Uddingston Grammar School are considering introducing something similar into their own educational provision.

The Strathclyde Regional Council Resource Centre for Visually Impaired Secondary Pupils is staffed by English teacher Joan Philip, science teacher Patricia White and history teacher Margaret McLatchie.

Its first "graduate", a 17-year-old Lanarkshire girl, has recently gone on to Glasgow University to study social science with the aim of becoming a social worker specialising in visual handicap.

At present there are 16 pupils sharing the full range of secondary education at Uddingston School. Most of them are local, with 6 travelling in, mainly by taxi, from nearby Glasgow. One boy is brought daily from the Clydeside town of Dumbarton, nearly 30 miles away. Naturally, it is hoped, Strathclyde's other 4 education divisions will have their own localised units.

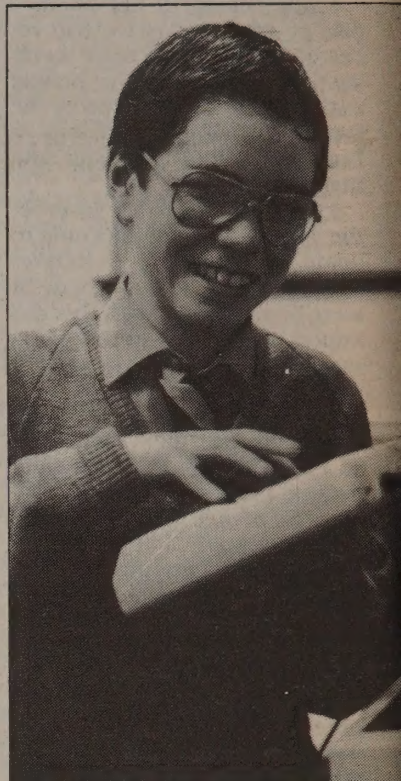
"Our aim," says Joan Philip, "is to help the visually impaired child to learn the skills necessary to cope in an ordinary school. Before the unit came along visually handicapped pupils either coped with very little help or went to special schools."

The 3 teachers also offer a peripatetic service to about 20 visually impaired children attending other secondary schools in Strathclyde's Lanark division and maintain close contact with pupils' families - undertaking home visits where necessary.

A special feature of the service is a close liaison with the education authority's careers service which begins its contact with Uddingston pupils in their second year.

All pupils in Scotland have to go on work experience schemes and already pupils from the unit have been placed successfully, including on a pre-YTS programme designed for handicapped school leavers, in a major chain store and in hairdressing shops. One of last year's leavers is now on a YTS placement and another is working as a shop assistant.

Ian Sutherland visits Scotland's first unit for visually impaired pupils within



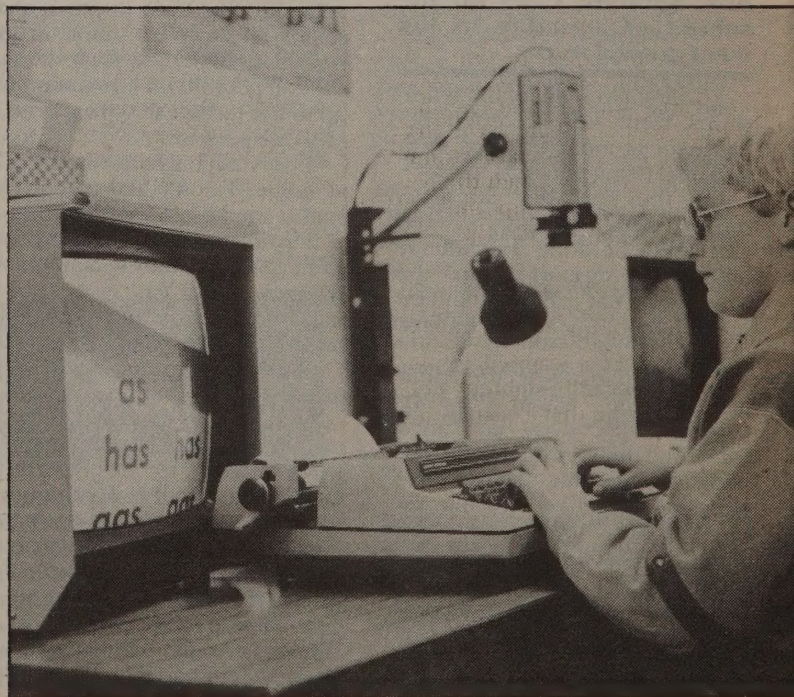
Iain, a visually impaired pupil, using a microwriter.

"We see our relationship with the careers service as increasingly important," reports Joan Philip, "and the children value the advice of expert people."

Visually handicapped pupils attending Uddingston are integrated into the school's day to day teaching and other activities virtually all the time.

In their first and second years they attend specialised tuition for 4 periods a week at the in-school resource unit, which is equipped with computers, closed circuit television, microwriters and electric typewriters. The staff also use these sessions to give training on "low vision" aids such as the personal telescopes needed to read the blackboard in class.

The unit staff also team-teach with their classroom-based colleagues for one period a week during the first and second years of attendance at Uddingston. They offer support and advice to both mainstream teacher and visually impaired pupil - making sure that pupils are able to copy from the blackboard properly and helping to suggest safety measures for visually impaired children.



Robert, who has a visual handicap, learns to type using an image magnifier. Other children in the unit learn to type.

Classroom - and

's first unit for visually stream school

dren doing technical subjects or home economics. Gradually the monitoring is eased off, leaving the handicapped pupils as full members of the class.

Micro-writer machines are replacing the pocket memos previously used by visually handicapped pupils to "take notes" from teachers. Pupils are encouraged to take these home and make full use of them outside school. Everyone learns to type during their time at Uddingston. Cooking recipes or science experiment procedures are put on Sony Walkman tapes.

The Uddingston staff are now looking covetously at a demonstration model of a new Japanese device for making raised diagrams, which would be invaluable for science lessons. It costs £4000.

Uddingston's visually handicapped pupils are playing an increasing part in the life of the school. All the children do PE. Alistair, a 13-year-old who's "built like a tank" has become a stalwart of the rugby team, and Nicola, a third year pupil, is making a name for herself as a

the comments they gave me.

With students from professional courses clamouring for placements at Uddingston and media attention growing, Scotland's first venture for visually handicapped young people has shown that educational integration has very much arrived.

"We can't be a solution for all problems," says Joan Philip, "but we have filled a gap between pupils being rather unsupported in mainstream schools or having to attend special schools."

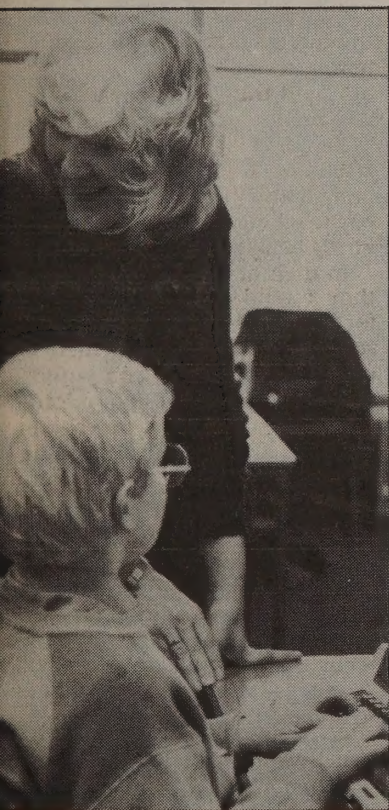
Ian Sutherland is a Glasgow journalist.

The school preferred that pupils' full names were not used.



Martin McClenaghan

Visually impaired pupils use telescopes to read from the blackboard, in a normal classroom situation. They are taught to use them in special tutor periods during their first and second years.



Teacher Joan Philip helping Robert in classroom.

marathon runner.

Sadly, the industrial action which Scots teachers have felt compelled to take over pay and conditions for the last 2 years has meant that virtually all extra-curricular activities at Uddingston have ceased. When the ban is relaxed, Joan Philip and her staff have various ideas they will be trying out, such as taking their pupils on to Scotland's ski slopes.

The resource centre staff report no problems with Uddingston's non-handicapped pupils. "Sometimes fully-sighted children complain that a visually impaired pupil has walked past and ignored them," says Joan Philip, "and we have to explain that they probably weren't seen." Sometimes, say the staff, the only problem is that most pupils are too kind and protective.

As for the visually impaired pupils themselves, they seem universally delighted to be at the unit and don't see themselves as different from anyone else. "Great", "fun" and "super" were



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OUTLOOK

FILMS

Malcolm

The lead character in *Malcolm* may be a young man with a mental disability, but, for better or worse, we learn little about his condition or problems. This is not a film of great psychological insight, though I suspect it hoped it might be.

Malcolm, living on his own in his dead mother's house, is forced to take on two lodgers when he loses his job at the tram terminus. Frank is slobbish and crooked; Judith his girlfriend is coarse but kind. Yet somehow Malcolm manages to adjust to the intrusion, and he is only too happy to turn his unusual talent for creating mechanical gadgets to less than honest purpose

when Frank introduces him to the rudiments of robbery.

Colin Friel's studied performance, shy, stooping, sullen then bursting into uproarious laughter, holds centre stage. But he is not the star. The film's greatest asset is its visual wit and this is totally dependent on Malcolm's inventions: a set of spying, walking, bleeping, talking living ashtrays; a car that miraculously splits into two motorbikes; a home-made mini tram on which Malcolm cruises round the streets by night; and a pistol-packing dummy in a remote-controlled wheelchair.

There are some very funny moments, and it is probably to the film's credit that it never gets too heavy or sentimental about Malcolm. His learning difficulty is manifested as a childishness and the writer David Parker makes a lot of playing his innocence against Judith and Frank's worldly experience of sex, money and violence. As such, I suppose, the film is about integration.

One can only wish that a film which sometimes charms could also have managed to convince.

Simon Crompton

Enterprise Pictures



Colin Friel as Malcolm.

THEATRE

Godspell

PATH (Practical Arts and Theatre with the Handicapped) was formed in 1981, the International Year of the Disabled, with the objective of integrating the talents of able-bodied and physically or mentally disabled performers in its productions. It is a venture that has received considerable - and justifiable - acclaim for the quality and value of its work.

That said, its latest production at the Jeannetta Cochrane Theatre, London, in January, was a disappointment. *Godspell* is, as the programme pointed out, "a popular entertainment that, when first performed, caused an outcry of protest and enthusiasm." Fifteen years later its impact is that of a fanfare on a muted trumpet.

As a choice of production for a company in 1987 it seems archaic and, in the case of PATH's production, singularly obtuse.

To choose to perform a musical with just one good singer seems as absurd as to play a major golf championship equipped with only a putter. Nabil Shaban is a fine performer and attacked his role as the Christ figure with

admirable invention, but I'm sure that not even his best friend could extol his singing virtues. He did at least, however, succeed in projecting his presence beyond the footlights and achieve a rapport with the audience well beyond any of his colleagues - with the exception of the versatile Ellie Hames.

Attempts were made to "contemporise" the show, but these consisted chiefly in the addition of some very feeble jokes. So many insertions were made, indeed, that it became extremely difficult to follow which story was in progress. Why Edna Everage should suddenly surface in the tale of the wicked servant still mystifies me, but I would be at least half-content had the scene been funny.

A major factor in the success of previous productions of *Godspell* has been the conviction of its casts (the Modern Secondary School for the Deaf's performance at Sadlers Wells last summer being an excellent example). In PATH's production, however, the cast seemed to be constantly in the process of deriding the text, which appeared to have become merely the excuse for a variety show.

I should mention, however, that the performance on the night I attended did seem to be enthusiastically received and the singing of Fio Dennison was a joy to listen to. Moreover, the substitution of live yoghurt for the fatted calf in the prodigal son story was a comic masterpiece. If only there had been more.

Alan Durant

PHOTOGRAPHY

Private worlds and public faces

Sam Tanner's photographic essay in black and white at the Cockpit Gallery, Holborn, London is well worth seeing.

The exhibition is in two parts. The first consists of photographs taken over a period of two years in a residential unit for children with multiple disabilities.

The photographer starts with quiet thoughtful studies of young people who seem so profoundly hampered by their degree of disability that they appear not to relate to an external world at all. In the accompanying introduction the point is made that "to become handicapped is not to become a member of another and lower species. However damaged people are they remain human."

The collection continues by showing people with disabilities enjoying awareness and emotional expression with their friends and carers. Occasional close-ups reinforce an individual's need for physical contact and closeness. This is tenderly illustrated in the portrait of a mother and her Down's Syndrome child sharing a bath-



Jewad is woken from his inner world by the flight of a soap bubble.

ing session. There is a stunning picture of Jewad, a brain-damaged boy, normally in a world of his own, captivated by the flight of a soap bubble.

The second part of the exhibition depicts the work of three theatre companies. Amici is an amateur company made up of people with and without mental and sensory disabilities. Students are guided through the creative process of dance improvisation giving them "the confidence to

capitalize on their abilities rather than dwell on their disabilities."

All the performers in the Strathcona company are disabled. With the help of two directors they devise and choreograph their own productions.

The third group, Double Exposure, see themselves as pioneering a new approach in which theatre companies offer places to talented and suitable

performers with disabilities in projects which may have no specific reference to disability in their cast or content.

The pictures combine warmth with a powerful message about the humanity of people with disabilities. Tanner fluently demands of the general public a reassessment of attitudes towards disabled people. His exhibition deserves attention and consideration.

Nigel Tuckett

ART

Conquest ignored

Gallery 47 in Great Russell Street, London, looks a good site to catch the eye of passersby to the British Museum, the YMCA or the Trades Union Congress. Yet the exhibition of work by members of Conquest, the Society for Art for the Physically Handicapped, has attracted only 12 people in 7 weeks.

This lack of interest seems quite shocking.

Some of the blame must rest with Conquest. One of its aims is organising exhibitions and "providing opportunities for artists to gain public recognition as active members of society."

It should be making greater efforts to inform the press well in advance.

Although its voluntary income is small, about £1,000 a year, and most of it goes on producing the magazine *Spectrum*, perhaps more of the money should go on publicity.

It is up to the editors to do their bit too. Whatever they may feel about the segregated, disability-emphasising, "charity" qualities of a Conquest exhibition, or the standard of some of the work, it should be given a fair chance.

In this exhibition, for example, there were some pictures I would not have wanted to miss.

Eileen Chitty, who cannot distinguish the lines she draws, produces strong designs using abstract flowers and leaves in pen-and-ink or ink and paint that would translate well on to fabric.

Maud Bullen, a *doyenne* of Conquest, was well-represented with the village-scapes she does now, but for me two early designs in ink and paint on marbled paper were more exciting: they had a surrealistic quality with animals or flowers milling around a single human figure.

Red Sails in the Sunset, which Ken Biggleston painted with his mouth, is just sails and a hull, thick, horizontal lines in greens, reds and purple, with V-shaped birds above.

A small picture by Jack Gooby,

who died last year, is called *Israel Remembered*. Again, the simplicity of half a picture of golden sand, small brown figures of men, and camels perhaps, on the horizon, and a huge sun shimmering overhead.

The exhibition showed many styles and materials. I felt my time there had been well spent.

If you would like to see a Conquest exhibition, there will be one at the Arnhem Gallery, Fairfield Hall, Croydon, from 23 February to 6 March from 10am-4pm (closed 24 and 26 February). But check the gallery first, tel: 01-681 0821.

Mary Wilkinson

For information about Conquest, contact Mrs Ursula Hulme, 3 Beverley Close, East Ewell, Epsom, Surrey, tel: 01-393 6102.

BOOKS

In Touch At Home

by Margaret Ford
(ISIS large print book, 55 St Thomas' Street, Oxford OX1 1JG, £5.95)

Margaret Ford is a social worker and a sighted presenter for the Radio 4 programme, *In Touch*. Her kitchen designed for a person with a visual disability is displayed at the Disabled Living Foundation.

In this book she applies the principles of good practice evident in the optician's consulting room to each room of the home so that a person with a visual disability can make the most of their vision.

Running through the book are these principles: light must be directed on to what you want to see; use contrast and colour to

outline objects clearly; large size and visibility are essential for signs, labels or dials on equipment; a person with a visual disability must be well organised (techniques are described in the book).

Margaret Ford also includes sections on writing aids and low visual aids.

The book has a bright attractive cover; it is also lightweight and the large print takes the strain out of reading. But the principles of good practice are not always applied to its layout and organisation.

A reference book like this should have subject headings, contents and index pages, and diagrams should be clearly labelled. There were subject headings only in the first and last chapters; there was no index and the diagrams were not labelled. This meant that access to information was difficult. For example, if you wanted to find out the most successful method for storing food, you would have to read the whole chapter on "the kitchen".

Nevertheless I found many of

the practical suggestions useful (some I already use), and I now understand why I always see more when I am having my eyes tested than at any other time. It is certainly a book for anyone who values their sight.

Sharon Hughes

PS I was impressed by the ISIS catalogue. I found a large print dictionary, a thesaurus and an atlas I didn't know existed.

I'm Louise

by Anne Rooke
(Learning Development Aids, Duke Street, Wisbech, Cambs PE13 2AE, £1.95)

I didn't know about Down's Syndrome and now I've read the book I still don't. Louise doesn't sound different from anyone else. Except for the shape of her eyes she doesn't look any different either.

The book tells us the sort of things Louise does during the day - riding, going to school, eating lunch, going on a swing, playing music, shopping, watching TV - with plenty of pictures. It



shows that she doesn't act differently from other people.

It is nice she is happy to talk about herself and say she is a Down's person.

Clara Wilkinson
(aged 11)

The book is designed for primary and infant school children. All profits will go to the Down's Syndrome Association.



Bring Bingo to Britain

Clive James on Television (LWT, 28 December) showed extracts from a Finnish sitcom called *Bingo*. Apparently, British TV chiefs are reluctant to show this comedy in full because many of the characters are disabled and the hero has cerebral palsy. The extracts showed that *Bingo* has a gentle but biting humour, combatting able-bodied stereotypes of disability. Like Clive James, I cannot understand why people should not want to show it. *Bingo* is the best sort of education, because it operates through entertainment and wit. I hear Channel 4 may take the plunge.

Same Game, Different Rules (repeated C4, 29 December) was originally reviewed in *DN* (June 1986) by Kathy Johnson. Since this programme went on to win an award and a sequel is now being produced, it seems that most people agreed with her viewpoint and liked it. I didn't. To me it was sentimental, adding to the "Aren't they brave" syndrome.

Desmond's Wilcox's series *The Visit* is often even more sentimental. However, with Yvonne and Jim McNally who are both disabled because of Thalidomide, he did not have to sensationalise. They were determined to have child, went to great pains to do so, but only six months after the joy of his birth their baby son died. We saw their joy but, to Wilcox's credit, we did not see their grief. Amazingly they chose to continue the film after a while, and also to go on trying for a family. This programme deserves a sequel.

Let's Take That Infernal Risk (C4, 4 January) was about the conductor Jeffery Tate and his music. This was primarily a music documentary and justly so. Why then did the programme's publicity emphasise his "severe disability"?

People's Minds (C4, 5 January) was a repeat about the Graeae theatre company's workshops. Its original value is questionable since the workshops are introspective and not designed for external view. In addition, the film meandered and was confusing. Why repeat it, then, particularly as it is now out of date and most of those featured have now left Graeae.

A Voyage Round the Monarchy (BBC2, 11 December) showed Andrew Miller questioning the media preoccupation with royalty. His disability was irrelevant to the programme, and it was good to see a disabled person talking about something other than disability.

Newsround Extra (BBC1, 16 January) showed the group "Kids on the Block" portraying disability through puppetry. Since it was meant for children, it merely explained the objective of "Kids" and did not question their values or methods. But it was OK as far as it went.

Watch out for... One In Four (BBC2, 2 Feb. Now monthly and extended to 30 mins) Hand in Hand (C4, 22 Feb) Listening Eye (C4, 27 Feb)

Chris Davies



Above: New buggy cape is waterproof, fits all sizes and chairs and has a full length front zip with a puller ring. £22. Waterproof overmitts, £3.50. Three Jay & Co, 9 The Precinct, High Rd, Broxbourne, Herts EN10 7HY, tel: (0992) 442974.

Below: Waterproof coverall, in 2 sizes and 4 colours, £11.50 (with sleeves £14.25), and showerproof, quilted comfy cover, £23.25 from Comfy Products, Providence Place, Bridlington, East Yorkshire YO15 2QW, tel: (0262) 676417. All prices are excluding VAT.



It's raining, it's pouring . . . but keep smiling

Mary Wilkinson and occupational therapist, Jeannie Ryan, look at rainwear mainly for wheelchair users

For people sitting immobile in a wheelchair, keeping warm and dry on a wet day is of primary importance.

Most manufacturers have mastered the basics of design and realise that it is no fun sitting in a puddle or having a short top that drips on to your feet. But many of them are still producing pvc-coated capes and coveralls and quilted leg muffs guaranteed to make your spirits drop. They may be waterproof and windproof, or showerproof and fully lined, but their shapeless styling and sombre colours are enough to keep you indoors.

Bottom of the list comes the cape available on prescription from the DHSS if you have a DHSS wheelchair, which envelopes you in black pvc from head to footplate and looks, as someone said, "absolutely dreadful."

But it's free. And there's the rub for anyone who would like something more exciting. The better designs, brighter colours and more comfortable "breathing" fabrics do cost more than traditional styles - about double in fact.

One company that stands out from the crowd is DriRider. They make "breathing" waterproof coordinates in various sizes for children and adults. The cape with detachable hood and the leg muff come with separate fleecy linings, and there are armguards, an unlined brimmed hat and a smart tote bag.

The colours are good enough to lift anyone's spirits: canary yellow with white trim, for example, or midnight with cherry trim or stone with midnight trim. Prices for a medium-sized adult are leg muff £40, cape £23.80, hood £9.60, hat £6.80, armguards £5 and bag £7.30.



DriRider's smart 3-piece outfit for women.

The Dame Hannah Rogers School for children with special needs in Devon has bought 10 DriRider outfits. Ruth Evans, matron and head of care, is so impressed with the cape and leg muff that she's recommended them to parents. "They are easy to put on and off and they keep wheelchair users warm," she says. "I think the outfit looks very fashionable and it doesn't show

up your disability. I wish they did trousers as well, though".

Three Jay who make waterproofs for active outdoor people as well as wheelchair users, do have pull-on trousers and a one piece suit (with full length front zip) which might be suitable for some children. They are interested in developing waterproofs for more active disabled children and are open to suggestions.

Simplantex, makers of wheelchair rainwear, are now using a polyurethane coated nylon for an all-over cape, poncho and leg muff which is wind, rain and cold proof and also breathes. The muff incorporates a fabric called Libond that is claimed to generate 20 per cent more warmth than any other fabric of its type on the market. In royal blue with a grey trim, the muff (£49.95) and cape (£39.95) are both stocked by Boots (see the Boots Personal Care Catalogue).

Rainwear has yet to become cheap and cheerful. Until disabled people reject the drab and opt in large numbers for the new designs, prices won't fall. But how many people can afford to start the trend?



Showerproof quilted cape covers knees and hands and allows wheelchair to be manoeuvred underneath. £22 from Three Jay & Co.

NEIGHBOURS AND NOW FOR THE GOOD NEWS

Good Neighbours News is a light-hearted newspaper packed full of competitions, puzzles, and quizzes. It costs just £1 a month and a large slice of that £1 goes straight to The Spastics Society.

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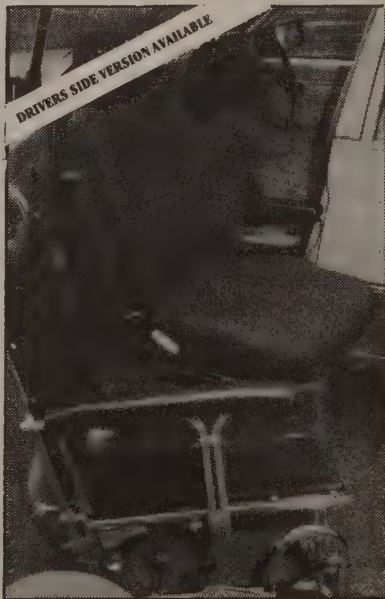
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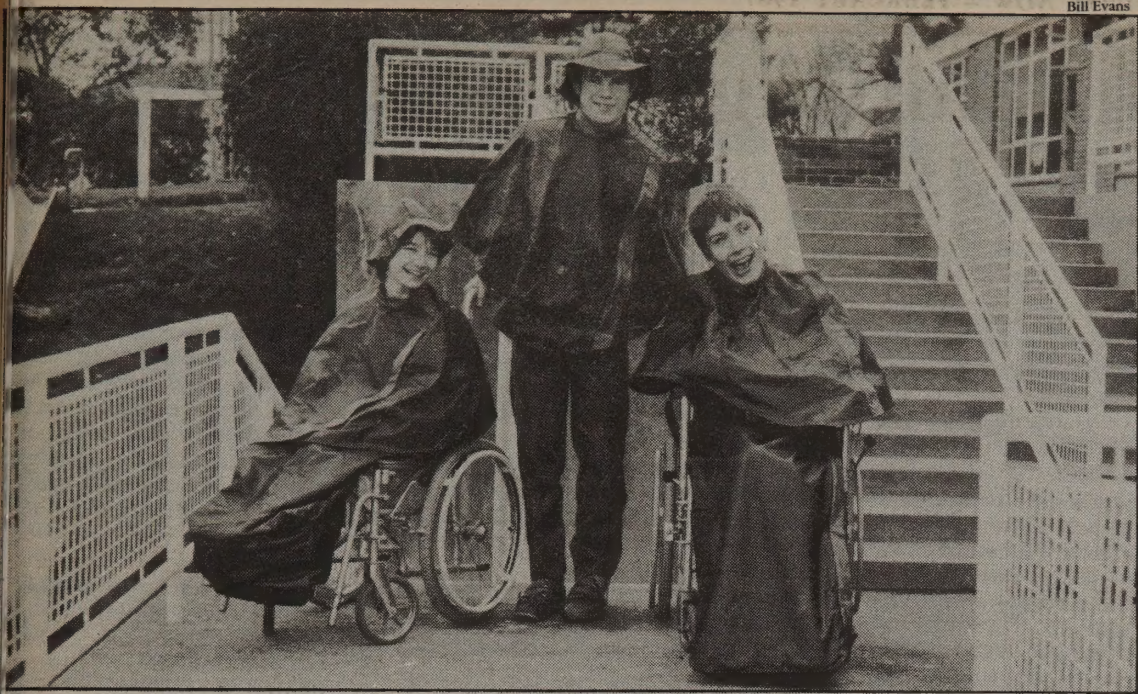
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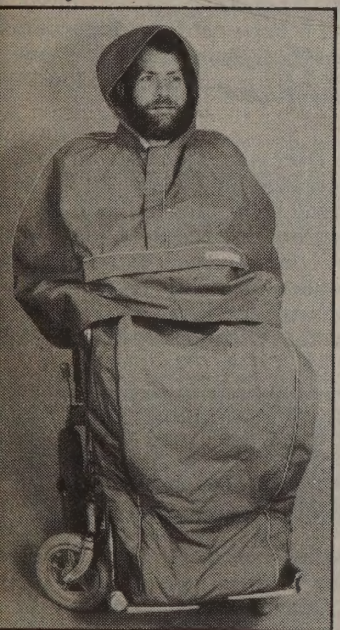
Year



From left, Gerry Jackson, Andrew Trigger and Robert McGarry from the Dame Hannah Rogers School in their DriR-ler rainwear. So far there are no matching trousers.



The waterproof wheelchair cape from Simplantex allows the body to breathe. There's a hidden, front-zipped pocket. £39.95 from Boots.



Waterproof poncho and wheelchair muff, the muff lined with fibond. Poncho, £45.94 from Simplantex Eastbourne Ltd, Willowfield Rd, Eastbourne, E. Sussex. Muff, £49.95 from Boots.

DN readers — please help

The DN mailing list is being transferred to a new computer. It would be a great help if all readers would check the label on their envelopes this month. If your name, address or postal code is not correct, please contact Gayle Mooney, Circulation Supervisor, Disability Now, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ, tel: 01-636 5020.

Bill Evans

British Telecom launches feedback competition for disabled customers



DN editor will be one of the judges

British Telecom is launching a competition for its disabled customers.

BT wants to hear what you think of its products or services and how these help you to cope with or overcome your disability.

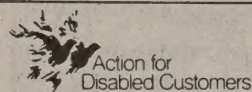
Twelve cordless telephones are waiting to be won. They will

go to the most interesting and original entries.

Mary Wilkinson, editor of *Disability Now*, is to be one of the judges.

"I do hope our readers respond — in large numbers!" she says. "We would like the national disability newspaper to produce more entries than anyone else."

Send your entries — of not more than 500 words — to BT by 31 March (see full details and entry form below).



12
CORDLESS
PHONES
TO BE WON

FEEDBACK

Using my hearing aid together with your Tremolo phone and its "inductive coupler" means that I can hear conversations so much more clearly.

Your Tribune push button telephone is a real boon to people like me with poor eyesight. The buttons are well spaced and the central figure 5 has a special dot so I can find it by touch.

The Easikom loudspeaking phone is so easy to use; it has made all the difference since my arthritis stopped me from using an ordinary phone.

The cordless phone is marvellous! Although I'm in a wheelchair, I can now make, and receive, calls from anywhere in the house or garden.

This is the sort of thing we hear from people about how BT's products and services have helped them cope with their disabilities.

It is our aim to extend and improve our service to the elderly and disabled, and it is for this reason that we are constantly talking to our disabled customers and related organisations, to hear their views.

But now we want to hear from you!

We should like you to tell us how BT's products or services help you to deal with

or overcome your own personal disability.

There are 12 cordless telephones to be won which will be awarded to the most interesting and original entries. Your entries should be in no more than 500 words, and can be submitted in writing, on audio cassette or in braille or moon.

So, please — help us to help you.

CONDITIONS OF ENTRY

1. Entries should be sent to British Telecom Competition (M. Events), Bridge House, 63-65 North Wharf Road, LONDON W2 1LA, and received by 31.3.87 with the completed coupon.
2. Only disabled people may enter and only one application per entrant (exc. BT employees and associates).
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Share Your Problems

With Margaret Morgan

How to stand up for yourself

Most people get annoyed when their views are ignored or dismissed out of hand. It is particularly frustrating for those who have communication problems or where physical disabilities create social barriers.

The following letters raise different problems, but both writers express vividly their justifiable anger when others do not treat them seriously.

"I am working for the Community Programme, updating an access guide for disabled people in my area. I enjoy this very much.

The problem is that my supervisor is unsympathetic towards disabled people. He makes me feel so unwanted, by telling me to be quiet when we are talking as a team. He says that there is no work for me to do, when I know that we should be checking the information which we have gathered by using some of the residents living in the home where we are based.

When I tried to speak to the senior officer he just gave me a lecture on how ungrateful I was and that I shouldn't complain about my supervisor. He never let me explain anything, he just left the room.

Many people have backed up what I said, so I know that I am not being too sensitive. Please will you advise me what I should do about this difficult position."

"I would dearly love to be able to drive, as I feel it would greatly enhance my life and open up a lot more opportunities to me. I have already

made some enquiries here in Northern Ireland and although they seemed to go well at first, I am now experiencing great difficulty.

I arranged for an interview and assessment - it was to last an hour - but I was back home long before the allotted time was up, and we live some distance from the driving school!

Share your problems by phone

If you want advice on a personal or spiritual problem, why not talk to Lin Berwick, *Disability Now's* telephone counsellor, who is disabled herself?

Lin is at the end of the line on Monday afternoons from 1pm to 5pm, and on Thursdays from 6pm to 10pm.

Her telephone number is Hornchurch (04024) 58325.

When I arrived I was asked some minor information and told that the necessary reports had been received. The assessor then tested the strength of my arms and my grip. Next thing I knew she was saying, 'Sorry, there is nothing I can do for you.'

When I asked if this meant I could not drive she replied, 'No, it means you could drive - maybe - but you require power assistance.'

I tried to pursue it further, but was ushered out.

The thing that amazes me is that I paid for an hour's assessment and this one barely lasted five minutes. I was neither in the test car to find out if I could sit safely, grip the steering wheel or anything else; nor was my sight checked, though I wear glasses. None of my reactions were tested. Frankly, I am



Simon Crompton

disgusted.

As I was leaving the lady advised me to 'go home, buy a car, have it converted and find a local instructor willing to teach you.' I honestly do not have that kind of money, especially if there is a strong chance of my not being able to drive.

I would like to know if there is a better type of assessment and whether it can be made available to Northern Ireland residents. I would be extremely grateful if you could help me, as I am sure you appreciate the importance of mobility and independence to people with disabilities."

I will write to each of you individually with suggestions for dealing with your particular problems, but here are some general hints which I hope you will find helpful:

1 It is often useful to put down on paper the points you want to make. Arrange these in order and write them as clearly and concisely as you can. Get someone else to read them through and then take their advice if they suggest any changes.

2 If communication is a real problem you may need to take someone with you. You should choose a friend who will interpret for you and not take over and exclude you from the conversation.

3 Booking a specific time for an appointment is helpful. Here again, a note of what you want to discuss can ensure that the time used profitably. Supervisors - and driving instructors - are busy people but there is no excuse, however, for refusing to listen to an employee's views or for not giving customers their money's worth when they have paid for a service.

4 It is important to try to see the other person's point of view and to put yourself in his or her shoes - though I realise this is not always easy!

My advice to the lady from Northern Ireland is to arrange another driving assessment, this time with an organisation which is prepared to give time and expertise.

You can book an assessment in England, though travelling and accommodation will add to the costs. The most appropriate one for your needs is Banstead Place Mobility Centre in Surrey.

The Northern Ireland Council for Orthopaedic Development will be able to advise on special facilities in your area. Do contact Mrs Thelma Greeves, the Organising Secretary, if you are not already in touch with her.

Disability Now will be conducting a survey of driving assessment centres later this year, so look out for the results.

Incidentally, it may not be too late to ask for a refund for your five minute driving test!

Banstead Place Mobility Centre, Park Road, Banstead, Surrey, tel: 07373 51756. Northern Ireland Council for Orthopaedic Development Inc., Room 107, Scottish Provident Buildings, 7 Donegall Square West, Belfast, tel: 0232 228378.

What's On

Courses at Castle Priory

Changing Patterns of Care in Education - a course for care coordinators and other senior care staff at schools where there are children with special needs. 4-6 March. Tuition £47, residence £42, non-residence £15.

The Bereeweke Skills Teaching System - a workshop on the use of this assessment and programme planning system developed for adults with disabilities in residential settings. Fees include a full pack of NFER material. 6-8 March. Tuition £85, residence £42, non-residence £15.

Play/Leisure for Adults with Disabilities - relating to those with multiple or severe disabilities, in Social Services Education Centres, Special Care Units or Hospital Services. 11-13 March. Tuition £47, residence £42, non-residence £15.

The Hand as a Guide to Learning - with special reference to those with a severe disability, and concerned with older children. 13-15 March. Tuition £47, residence £42, non-residence £15.

Micro-Technology and Special Educational Needs - an intensive course for those working with children and young people with special educational needs. No prior knowledge or experience of micro-technology is needed. 16-20 March. Tuition £70, residence £84, non-residence £30.

Personal Relationships and Sexuality - a weekend course for staff working with people who have learning difficulties. Course tutors: Family Planning Association. 27-29 March. Tuition £50, residence £42, non-residence £15.

For more information about any of these courses, write to Castle Priory College, Thames Street, Wallingford, Oxon OX10 0HE. Tel: (0491) 37551.

Conferences and Leisure

Where you will be in 2000 AD? is a two-day conference on 7 and 8 March at Graham House, the NCB Training College, Benton, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, organised by The Spastics Society's North East Region. It will explore lifestyles for a positive future for people with cp and their families. For more information tel: (0385) 62127.

Handel's Messiah will be performed by the English Baroque Choir in the Royal Albert Hall, London, on Sunday 8 March. All the proceeds will be shared by The Spastics Society and the Dystonia Society, and the event is being sponsored by Skandia Life Assurance. Tickets, priced £10, £9, £8.50, £7.50, £6.50, £5, £3.50, are available from Veronica Fisher, The Spastics Society, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ. Tel: 01-636 5020. See insert

Disabled Living Foundation Courses. The Aids and Equipment Centre of the DLF is holding a number of day courses in 1987: 12 or 13 March - Choosing a Chair; 7 or 8 May - Kitchen Design; 2 or 3 July - Children's Equipment; 6 August - Visual Handicap; 3 or 4 September - Electric Wheelchairs; 15 or 16 October - Personal Care, Bathrooms and Design; 3 or 4 December - Manual Wheelchairs. £25 per course. For further details contact DLF, 380-384 Harrow Road, London W9 2HU. Tel: 01-289 6111.

What Will Happen to Him When We Die? is a conference on 23-27 March at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge and organised by the International Cerebral Palsy Society. It will look at the needs of adults and elderly people with a severe congenital or acquired disability. Papers to be presented include "Can the community care?" and "Stress management techniques for caring people". Of interest to professionals, disabled people and carers, the course fee is £160 (including accommodation and meals). Further details from Anita Loring, ICPS, 5a Netherhall Gardens, London NW3 5RN. Tel: 01-794 9761.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Local DIALS. There are 75 Disablement Information and Advice Lines over England, Scotland and Wales offering help with questions on every aspect of disability. Each also has extensive information on local facilities. To find out the number of your local DIAL look in your phone book or contact DIAL UK, Dial House, 117 High Street, Clay Cross, Derbyshire. Tel: (0246) 864498

Petrol Station Guides. Three guides list garages offering facilities and assistance for disabled drivers. *Esso Services for Disabled People*, free from Esso UK, Esso House, Room T1122, Victoria Road, London SW1; *Easier Motoring for Disabled Drivers*, free from UOMK/7145, Shell UK Oil, Shell-Mex House, Strand, London WC2; *Accessible London Petrol Stations*, available free from Wandsworth Disablement Association, 3rd floor, London Production Centre, Broomhill Road, London SW18 4QJ.

Reading Plans is an information pack by Stephen Thorpe which explains to the lay person the conventions of architects' drawings and how to interpret them. It would be useful for disabled people in local access groups, occupational therapists advising on home adaptations and anyone involved with the buildings in their local communities. £2.50 (including postage) from the Access Committee for England, 35 Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BJ. Tel: 01-222 7980.

The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, has certain performances where there is extra access for wheelchair users. The next performance is *La Fille Mal Gardée* on 3 March at 7.30pm. Tickets cost £5 each for wheelchair space and escort (if needed). Box office, tel: 01-246 1066. Where spaces are available, wheelchair users can also attend school matinees. Contact the Education Department, tel: 01-240 1200, ext 353.

THE
ORTHO-MED

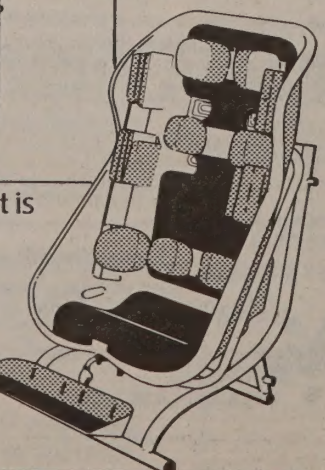
SNUG SEAT

The Ortho-Med Snug-Seat has been designed and developed by Rehabilitation Engineers to enhance the sitting position of the younger disabled child

with moderate seating problems.



The Ortho-Med Snug-Seat is designed to be flexible in need and application. A modular system of pads enables adaption to the shape of the child, and the seat can easily transfer from home to car to baby buggy.



ORTHO-MED, 5 Loaning Road, Edinburgh EH7 6JE. Tel: 031-652 1603

PEOPLE



Anthea Millett has been promoted to chief inspector in HM Inspectorate, with responsibility for special needs in schools and further and higher education.

She will co-ordinate the work of the Inspectorate to ensure that the needs of disabled people in ordinary and special schools are met.

Anthea Millett, 45, joined HM Inspectorate in 1977 after a career as a geography teacher in Highgate, Bournville, Solihull and Coventry, which included teaching children with learning difficulties.

Among the many people mentioned in the New Years Honours List for their work with disabled people was Mrs Grace Wyatt, who received a British Empire Medal for her services to the Charnwood Nursery Centre



in Cheshire.

Starting informally with a few children, she built a playgroup into an integrated nursery centre which now has 170 pre-school children, 50 of them with severe disabilities.

In next month's *DN* she will be writing about Charnwood and giving her views on integrated education.



Teddy Bears on Parade Sirdar have produced a new booklet of knitted teddy patterns, called *Teddy Bear Parade*, as a sequel to *Teddy Bears Picnic* which raised £4,000 for severely disabled children. Mrs Nell Hunter, who designs the teddies, has boosted the fund by a further £6,600 by making them with yarn donated by Sirdar and then selling them. Sirdar have pledged that a percentage of the 65p cover price will go to disabled people.

CLASSIFIED

Find-A-Friend

DISABLED LADY, enjoys caring for her dog, travel and writing letters, would like to correspond with a man (disabled or able-bodied) between 36 and 40 years. Please write to Box No 139, *Disability Now*, address on page 16 (marking envelopes Private & Confidential).

LADY seeks female piano-playing friend in the Oxford area (or overseas). Also wants sheet piano music of old popular songs. Please write to Box No 140, *Disability Now*, address on page 16 (marking envelopes Private & Confidential).

ALWAYS THE BRIDESMAID AND NEVER THE BRIDE? Join The Outsiders Club - a national organisation for socialising. Caring people only. PO

Box 42B, London W1A 4ZB. Tel: 01-499 0900.

ABLE-BODIED WOMAN, 66, quiet but cheerful, would like to write to or visit housebound, disabled gent, age 62-70, living in Hastings area. Please write to Box No 141, *Disability Now*, address on page 16 (marking envelopes Private & Confidential).

Holidays

VARCOE HOUSE HOLIDAY FLATS. Two well equipped self-catering flats, each to sleep up to 6 people, especially adapted for the disabled. Level access to flats and nearby sandy beach. Ample parking. Seasonal price range £45-£60 per week. Details from booking Manager,

Mr LE Elliott, 3 Bosvean Gardens Illogan, Nr Redruth. Tel: (0209) 218650

TWO SPECIALLY ADAPTED LUXURY BUNGALOWS, set in the heart of Clwyd, North Wales among magnificent pine trees, minutes from Mold town centre. Sleeps 4/6, each with additional separate bathrooms for wheelchair users. South facing private gardens, patio, barbeque, central heating, colour TV, stereo, large drive, telephone. Rates £135-£140 per week. Discounts available. Brochure from Mrs Lynn Dowling, 23 Gleneagles Road, Great Sutton, South Wirral L66 4NF. Tel: 051-399 5316 or 051 355 1005.

WOODVIEW-SEASIDE HOME FOR THE HANDICAPPED. We are a residential home situated ½ mile away from Weston beach, with permanent full-board accommodation. We are now taking bookings for holiday/respite care. There are unlimited activities including aerobics, cookery, computer games, hairdressing salon, library, handicrafts, model making, printing, pool room, stamp collecting and woodwork. Any other personal interests are catered for. In pursuit of an ordinary life for handicapped adults, Woodview offers a homely atmosphere with 100 per cent care and attention. All enquiries welcome. Ring Debbie on (0934) 20146/32958 or write to Woodview, Sandford Road, Weston-Super-Mare, Avon BS23 3EY.

TRESIZE COTTAGE purpose-designed holidays for families with a wheelchair. Send sac for full details to: Mrs Russell, Tresize, St Martin, Helston, Cornwall TR12 6EF.

Wanted

FLAT FOR NEWLY MARRIED COUPLE, one partner in wheelchair. W Sussex/Brighton area. Up to £35,000. Miriam. Tel Burgess Hill (044 46) 42352

Services

SPECIAL CARE AGENCY finds nannies-mothers' helps for handicapped children (like mine), or care assistants for adults, everywhere. Ring Linda Layton (0491) 671842.

For Sale

ELECTRIC EASY RISE/RECLINER CHAIR Model 400. Upholstered gold fabric. Cost £1,190. New in May 1986. Now asking £850 ono. Tel: Harpenden (05827) 5306

MEYRA POWERCHAIR Left hand control, 5 yrs old, rarely used, in good working order. Recently fitted with new batteries. £650 ono. Stuart Marshall, tel: (0462) 32618

MINI VAN CONVERSION FOR WHEELCHAIR. V reg, 43,000 miles. Well maintained, MOT and tax until April '87. £1,000. Mr Bentley, Blakedown, Kidderminster. Tel: (0562) 700216

BATRICAR. 10 yrs old. Brakes need attention. Spare parts etc. £150 ono. Tel: (0761) 70585

BEC ELECTRIC CHAIR. In good condition. Complete with battery charger. Will accept £250. Tel: (0908) 560738

FORD ESCORT 1.3 1985. Ocean Blue, taxed 6 months. Fully equipped with hydraulically operated wheelchair

which lifts into front passenger seat space. Wheelchair suitable for indoor or outdoor use. £8,000+ miles. £6,500 ono. Tel: Bognor Regis (0243) 824842 evenings or weekends.

DASHING DUDLEY POWER PLUS indoor/outdoor wheelchair. Very good condition. Complete with lights, horn, battery charger, instruction booklet, unused batteries. Cost £1,700. Absolute bargain £800 ono. Tel: 01-609 6846.

MEYRA POWER CHAIR, R or L hand control. Kerb climber, 2 new batteries, 4 years old, recently overhauled. Cost £2,850, asking £700. Mr Reeves, Tel: 01-570 9902. (after 6 pm)

CLASSIFIED RATES: £1.50 per line, with a minimum charge of £6. Advertisers are invoiced after the advertisement appears. Find-a-Friend column is free. (All ads are free for members of The Spastics Society or an affiliated group.)

Assistant to the Arts and Disability Officer

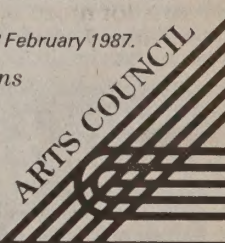
This post is to support the work of the Arts and Disability Officer, especially in the key areas such as disability awareness training and in liaising with clients. Good typing and secretarial skills are required (but shorthand is not essential). As the person appointed will be required to deputise for the Arts and Disability Officer in her absence, good organisational ability and a willingness to take on responsibility are also essential, as is an understanding of the needs of people with disabilities particularly in relation to the arts.

Salary £8172 pa to start rising by increments to £9391 pa, inclusive of a £400 pa secretarial allowance.

For an application form and job description, please contact the Personnel Department, 105 Piccadilly, London W1V 0AU. Tel: 01-629 9495 ext. 266.

Closing date for receipt of applications, Friday 13 February 1987.

The Arts Council welcomes applications from all sections of the Community regardless of race, colour, ethnic or national origins, marital status, sex, sexual orientations, disability or religious beliefs.



COMMUNITY & RECREATIONAL ARTS IN BARNET

Photography project with disabled people



Two vacancies exist in the above project:

Development assignment - for one year: c£5,000 average 20 hours p/w expected. We are looking for an experienced development worker to establish a fully wheelchair accessible photography base for people with disabilities.

Photography instructor - person with teaching and photography experience wanted to organise and run community based workshops for people with disabilities. 16 hours per week: £4000 per annum.

For further details contact Crab, East End Road, London N3 3QE. Closing date 20th February.

CRAB IS COMMITTED TO EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF WOLVERHAMPTON

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND POLICY COORDINATOR SERVICE DEVELOPMENT OFFICER (People with disabilities)

Salary scale PO a/b £11,952 - £13,653

This is a new post established to promote equal opportunities for people with disabilities in the service provision of the Council.

Applicants should possess appropriate academic qualifications and have experiences of working with people with disabilities, together with a thorough understanding of the issues of discrimination and equal opportunities.

The postholder will liaise with local groups and will act as a leader officer for the sub-committee for People with Disabilities, therefore good communication skills are essential. Suitably qualified persons with disabilities will be given preference for appointment to this post.

Application forms and job description from Controller of Personnel and Management Services, Civic Centre, St Peters Square, Wolverhampton Tel (0902) 27811 ext 2136 Closing date 16th February 1987.

Wolverhampton Metropolitan Borough Council is an equal opportunity employer and positively welcomes applications from all sections of the community irrespective of an individuals sex, ethnic or national origin, colour, age (up to 65 years) disability, sexual orientation or responsibility for dependants.

WOLVERHAMPTON
the pace setter

Making sure disability is no disability

At St Albans we take equal opportunities for all seriously. That's why we're looking for a Disability Resource Officer who can become our focal point for disability issues.

Disability Resource Officer

£12,177 - £13,119 p.a.

You will be examining our current situation and future policies in relation to the needs of people with disabilities, both internally within the Council, and throughout the District. Advising, educating and researching, you will provide the link between the Council, individuals and outside organisations and your aim will be to make disability, no disability.

Obviously, your knowledge and experience of such issues will be thorough. Local government practices and operations should hold no mysteries either. The post calls for an outgoing personality, with the skills to communicate your ideas well and in a caring manner.

In return we can offer a good salary, flexitime, free life assurance, relocation expenses and assistance with home purchase in certain cases.

Applications are welcome from anyone irrespective of their sex, marital status, race, religion, colour or disability.

Job description and application form available from the Personnel Division, 92 Hatfield Road, St. Albans to whom completed application forms should be returned by 20th February 1987.



Nowhere to go for disabled people in 5 London boroughs, says new report

Accommodation for disabled people in London varies dramatically depending on where you live.

Only 15 of the 32 London boroughs have suitable residential accommodation for physically and multiply disabled people and 5 boroughs - Greenwich, Kensington and Chelsea, Richmond, Sutton and Westminster - have none at all.

While there are 15 residential homes where people with mental or learning difficulties can be five or less to a home - in accordance with *Home Life*, the philosophy behind the 1984 Registered Homes Act - there is nothing similar for people with physical or multiple disabilities. Indeed, most people live in homes with at least 20 other people, and there are still 4 London hospitals each of which is home for over 100 people.

These are some of the shocking findings of a new report published this month by The Spastics Society, sponsored by The London Regional Fund. It is the result of a survey carried out between September 1985 and October 1986.

The survey looked at statutory residential accommodation, housing built or adapted for wheelchairs by the local authorities or housing associations, community support services, and respite care. There is a borough by borough comparison.

The survey finds that of 222 residential homes in London for people with disabilities, only 64

are for people with physical or multiple disabilities, (and 25 of them are for children).

"These figures illustrate the low priority that has been generally accorded to the provision of services to physically and multiply disabled people by the statutory authorities", says Tim Cooper, author of the report.

In some boroughs the services are improving. Islington and Camden are setting the standard for wheelchair housing (with Bexley and Enfield at the bottom of the scale) and housing associations have been making valiant efforts. But cuts in the central government housing budget are making funding much more difficult for them.

Community support services are difficult to assess, says the report, because they provide care not just bricks and mortar. While domiciliary support has improved generally, 16 boroughs have no Crossroads Care Attendant Scheme.

Respite care is still mainly provided through hospital beds. Eight boroughs now have a "foster family" scheme and there is a sprinkling of respite homes.

It is no surprise to read in the conclusions that: "Appropriate care within the local community is still not a reality for most people with disabilities in London."

Accommodation and Related Services for Disabled People in London is available from Tim Cooper, The Spastics Society, 32/38 Osnauburgh Street, London NW1, tel: 01-387 5505. £2 or free to affiliated groups.

Gallup poll results

continued from page 1

discrimination acceptable for people with disabilities, mainly because of their patronising attitude towards them."

In another Gallup poll released last month by the Disablement Income Group, 880 people were asked if the difference in benefits received by those who were born disabled, injured at home or injured at work, were fair.

DIG had produced figures to show that a man paralysed from the neck down in an accident at work, would receive a maximum of £199.45 a week. If he had been injured at home he would be entitled to £91.30 - even if he had paid National Insurance contributions - and if he had been born with that disability he would get £75.95.

83 per cent of those polled said the differences are unfair and the amount received by the man born disabled is completely inadequate. 66 per cent said they would be prepared to pay more tax to cover the increased costs.

"We have had a very clear message from the public about their willingness to support a national disability income scheme," said Jack Ashley MP.

Major considers benefits plan

Six disability organisations have persuaded John Major, Minister for Social Security, to consider a proposal which will protect the living standards of severely disabled people.

Instead of a flat rate Severe Disability Premium which would have come into operation in April 1988, the organisations suggest that existing additional payments, eg for extra laundry or special diets, should continue to be paid until there is new legislation for improved benefits based on a government survey of disabled people. That survey should be complete by 1988.

The proposal, made by the BCODEP, the Disablement Income Group, Disability Alliance, RADAR, RNIB and The Spastics Society, is not expected to cost the Government any more than at present.

Those who qualify for Income Support would receive the basic personal allowance plus £12.25 disability premium and be eligible for a limited range of SB additional allowances paid, as now, at variable rates.

John Major has stressed that he cannot give any commitment at this stage.



Bear hug. The Princess of Wales relaxing with a friend on a visit to Tadworth Court Children's Hospital last month. She met children with head injuries and cystic fibrosis, terminally ill and handicapped children and their families.

Phone priority for disabled people will continue

Disabled people who rely upon the telephone as a lifeline will continue to receive a free priority service when a new fault repair system is introduced in April.

Those on the current priority repair list should receive a letter from British Telecom shortly explaining the new system. They will continue to receive priority if they can provide evidence from a medical authority, for example their GP, confirming that the telephone is a lifeline.

People who cannot provide medical support for their application will have to pay the new charges.

A spokesman for British Telecom said it was unlikely that disabled customers now receiving priority treatment would be denied it under the new system.

There will be no change to the standard fault repair service

which customers receive as part of their quarterly rental.

BT pledge

British Telecom says that disabled customers need not worry that the current strike by BT's engineers could jeopardise their life-line. "We have pledged that we will maintain services in emergencies. If a disabled customer indicates when reporting a fault that the telephone is a necessity for them, then naturally they will be given consideration in getting early repair for that fault."

Many loop systems are of "little or no use"

Special equipment installed by theatres to help deaf people hear invariably fails to provide any benefit at all, says the Royal National Institute for the Deaf. In its survey of the performance of induction loop systems installed in theatres in the London area, it found that two thirds of the loops were virtually useless.

One and a half million hearing aid users in Britain have hearing aids which can receive signals from loop systems - magnetic devices which allow deaf people to hear speech clearly when at a distance from the speaker. The RNID embarked on a survey of the London theatres known to have induction loops after receiving complaints about the poor performance of many.

Hearing aid users carried out the survey, visiting each of the 14 theatres as ordinary members of the audience. Even though theatres had been warned of their visit beforehand, only 4 of the loops had an acceptable standard of performance. The loop system in 3 theatres did not work at all but the theatre staff were not aware of this. And only 3 theatres had signs clearly indicating the presence of a loop.

"The results of this survey are very disappointing," said Mike Whitlam, chief executive of the RNID, "not just because of all the effort that has gone into encouraging theatres to install loop systems, but for the effect on the large number of hearing aid users who do not hear well in theatres."

"Furthermore we are deeply concerned that this situation may be reflected in theatres in other parts of the country and in churches, railway stations and public halls where loops have been installed."

The survey is available from the RNID, 105 Gower Street, London WC1E 6AH. tel: 01-387 8033.

Disability Now

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IN-VALID?

Understanding Disability

PROJECTWORKER needed to complete a community arts team.

IN-VALID? exists to promote awareness of and fundamentally change attitudes towards disability and discrimination using community arts as a vehicle for expression.

Applicants should have good communication skills and understand the ideals of the community arts movement and have first-hand experience of disability.

Salary £8925 per annum.

Further information and application forms from B.M.C.V.S., 19/25 Sunbridge Road, Bradford, W. Yorks BD1 2AY. Telephone: Bradford 722772.

Closing date: Monday 16th February 1987.

IN-VALID? is an equal opportunities employer and particularly welcomes applications from disabled people.

**WESSEX
MEDICAL
EQUIPMENT
COMPANY
LIMITED**

Dept. 34
Budds Lane
Industrial Est.
Romsey
Hampshire
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SLIMLINER STAIRSEAT

MANUFACTURER OF ELECTRIC HOISTS, STAIRSEATS,
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AND AGENTS FOR THE MEDIC BED